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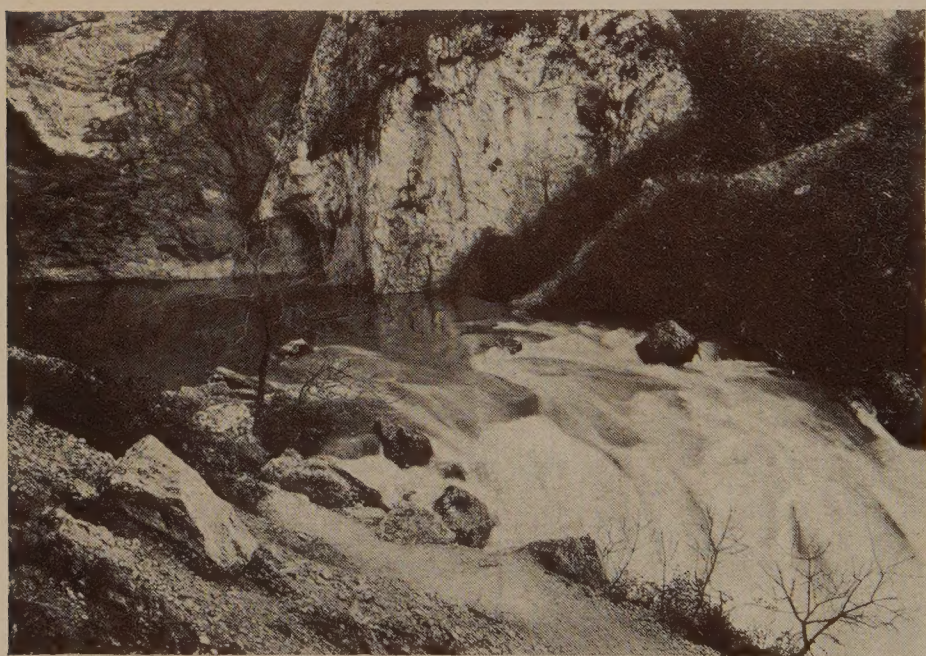












THE CAVE AND FOUNTAIN OF VAUCLUSE.

*Frontispiece.*



# FRANCESCO PETRARCA

THE FIRST MODERN MAN OF LETTERS

HIS LIFE AND CORRESPONDENCE

A STUDY OF THE EARLY FOURTEENTH CENTURY  
(1304-1347)

VOLUME II

SECLUDED STUDY AND PUBLIC FAME

BY

EDWARD H. R. TATHAM, M.A., F.S.A.

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TO  
MY WIFE  
I DEDICATE THIS VOLUME





## FOREWORD

I DESIRE to express my sincere acknowledgments to M. Honoré Champion, the publisher of M. Pierre de Nolhac's *Pétrarque et l'Humanisme* (1907), for his courteous permission to reproduce (as the frontispiece of Vol. I.) the portrait of Petrarch from Tome I. of that work, and the sketch by the poet of the Fountain of Vacluse (facing page 63 of this volume) from Tome II.

E. H. R. T.



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## BOOK III

THE REVIVAL OF ANCIENT LEARNING—PETRARCH  
IN HIS RETREATS AND ON THE CAPITOL (1337-1343)





# FRANCESCO PETRARCA

## CHAPTER XII

### THE LATIN CLASSICS IN THE MIDDLE AGES, ESPECIALLY IN ITALY, FOR A CENTURY AFTER A.D. 1250

IN this chapter we are faced with the difficult task of estimating the state of classical learning at the moment when Petrarch, retiring to Vacluse, began the most fruitful part of his life-work—the revival of the true spirit of Antiquity. He has often been called the Father, or Founder, of the *Renaissance*. But, however convenient that word may be to express the awakening of mankind from the torpor of the Dark Ages, it really describes a movement which began long before his time and did not reach its culmination, even in Italy, till nearly a century after his death. The “Revival of Ancient Learning,”<sup>1</sup> which is specially associated with his name, was but an episode—though, perhaps, the most important—in a vaster intellectual Revival, which put forth its first germs in the rise of the Romance literatures, in the renewed study of Roman Law in Italy, and even in the use of the “Latin” Aristotle (recovered through the Arabs) by the greater schoolmen. The “later Middle Age” (1100–1450), which is now justly distinguished from the “Dark Age” (500–1100),<sup>2</sup> was far from being a period of intellectual slumber and decay. Prof. Bartoli<sup>3</sup> is right in insisting that

<sup>1</sup> This seems to me a more just expression than Symonds’ “Revival of Learning,” which is still usual. P. himself (in *F.* VI. 2) draws the line between “ancient” and “new” at the advent of the Christian Empire (Frac. I. 314).

<sup>2</sup> Prof. W. P. Ker (*The Dark Ages*, 1911, pp. 1–7) notes that this distinction is comparatively recent. Similarly D. Comparetti (*Virgilio nel Medio Evo*, Florence, 1896, I. 244) distinguishes between the “Latin” and the “popular” Middle Age.

<sup>3</sup> In his *I precursori del Rinascimento* (Florence, 1877), pp. 92, 93.

there were really two "Renaissances"—the first, the Revival of Literature, gradually affecting all Europe about the opening of the twelfth century, the second—which is rather the Revival of Ancient Learning—beginning in Italy in the first half of the fourteenth.

But the recognition of this true distinction does not mean either that Italy ever lagged behind her northern neighbours in general culture, or that their learned men did not sometimes, especially in the earlier centuries of the First Renaissance, surpass her in the field of scholarship. Certainly the Italian vernacular literature developed later than those of Provence and northern France; but this was because the debased Latin of the Church and of the Schools was still a living language in Italy, and also because the dialects spoken there were more cognate to it than those spoken in the outlying provinces of the old Empire. And yet, from this very association with Latin, the Italian arrived at perfection far sooner. The general level of secular culture throughout the Middle Ages was higher in Italy (at least in some part of it) than that attained at the same time in the surrounding countries.<sup>1</sup> The appearance of a few prominent scholars at Aix in the eighth century, or at Paris, Chartres and Orleans in the twelfth, is not inconsistent with this fact, just as a few isolated mountains do not greatly raise the average level of a vast expanse of plain. The genius of the Italian was severely practical. He had no use for an erudition, like that of Vincent of Beauvais (thirteenth century), which was mainly encyclopædic; and he was not naturally inclined to logic or abstract speculation. He "did not object to reasoning *a priori*, but required that it should be employed upon a concrete reality."<sup>2</sup> Italy, indeed, had her schoolmen, and among them the most famous of all—as Lanfranc, Anselm, Peter Lombard, Aquinas, Bonaventura—but they did not succeed in imbuing her with the scholastic spirit. Her first work was the recovery and interpretation of the old Roman Law; and the philosophy which

<sup>1</sup> This is denied by Comparetti (I. 253), whose view is echoed by Symonds (*Revival of Learning*, p. 68). But I believe, for the reasons here stated (and others to follow) that the contrary opinion of Burckhardt (I. 242, 261) and Rashdall (I. 91) has better foundation. Comparetti inconsistently admits (I. 247) that in the age of Charlemagne only an Italian layman could have emancipated the lay intellect from clerical tutelage.

<sup>2</sup> E. Gebhart, *Les Origines de la Renaissance en Italie*, pp. 57, 58.



attracted her was always moral and political rather than metaphysical. And yet—though it seems almost a paradox—along with her practical bent, went a strain of high idealism in the political sphere. Outwardly, she seemed a mass of conflicting political atoms; but she cherished all the more fondly the memories of her former unity and world-wide supremacy.

In a well known passage Macaulay has compared the night which descended upon Italy in the Dark Ages to that of an Arctic summer. "The dawn began to appear before the last reflection of the preceding sunset had faded from the horizon."<sup>1</sup> There is poetic truth in the comparison, as there is also in the parallel figure by Comparetti<sup>2</sup> that classical antiquity in its mediæval environment is "like the sun shining through a fog, which loses its power to illumine, to warm and to fertilize." As in some Arctic region the great luminary at midnight, riding low in the heavens, becomes refracted and distorted to the observer's eye by rolling mists, so that its very properties seem changed; so Virgil is magnified to a wonder-working sorcerer, Cicero shrinks to a puny pedagogue, Ovid is transformed into a doctor of philosophy.<sup>3</sup> Yet—if we may draw out the comparison a little further—the Italian, like some bewildered Eskimo, while recognizing it as the same sun, was under the delusion that it was the same day. Since he did not possess the "clock" of the historic sense, which alone could measure the flight of time, he could not distinguish between the sunset and the sunrise. He saw the same landscape which met the eye of the Roman—republican and Imperial—and he could not understand that there was a difference between the "setting" of the old Empire and the "rising" of its mediæval substitute. The dream of universal Empire stubbornly persisted in his mind long after the reality had departed. Italy was still no province, but "the Lady of Provinces"<sup>4</sup>; her people were the heirs of Roman greatness, even

<sup>1</sup> *Essays* (cr. 8vo. ed. 1902), p. 31. J. E. Sandys (*History of Classical Scholarship*, 1905, I. p. 587) adduces an exact parallel from A. P. Ozanam (*Documents Inédits*, 1850, p. 28).

<sup>2</sup> I. 245 (Eng. trans. by Benecke, p. 184).

<sup>3</sup> H. O. Taylor (*Classical Heritage of the Middle Ages*, p. 46, n.) quotes a decree of a Council of the eleventh century, which speaks of Ovid as "Doctor Egregius."

<sup>4</sup> Cf. the words of Buoncompagno (about 1215), a professor of grammar and rhetoric at Bologna, quoted by Gaspary (Oelsner's translation, p. 40). Cf. also Dante's expression in *Purg.* VI. 78 (Longfellow):

"No lady thou of provinces, but brothel."

though her ruler was a stranger, residing in the barbarous north.

If we would comprehend the Middle Ages, we must grasp the fact that the national consciousness of Italy was firmly rooted in the past. She was no new nation, like the Franks and Germans ; the sway of Rome—though actually it had ceased to be—remained the indefeasible heritage of all classes. The riff-raff of mediæval Rome was still to Dante “ that holy, pious and glorious people which had neglected its own profit for the benefit of the human race.”<sup>1</sup> It was through this “ Imperial self-consciousness ” that the study of Roman Law revived in the twelfth century ; but in the following ages the absence or indifference of her Emperors was, in the poet’s view, the cause that prevented the accomplishment of Rome’s true mission.

“ What boots it that for thee Justinian  
The bridle mend, if empty be the saddle ? ”<sup>2</sup>

But, in Italy, in the early dawn of the fourteenth century, when the Empire under Henry VII. was disappointing its idealist supporters, there began to be a glimmering sense that Rome’s future sway would be exercised through the intellect—in the realm, not of matter, but of the spirit. Thus Giovanni Villani, when present as a youth at the Jubilee of 1300, conceived the project of his “ History ” from the example of his Latin precursors Virgil, Lucan, Livy, Valerius, and Orosius.<sup>3</sup> The ruins of Rome fired him with a desire to emulate her great writers. To him, probably, most of these were “ mere names,” yet still they were regarded with awe and pride. Dante, too—himself a champion of “ the vulgar eloquence ”—can still claim a proprietary share in the Latin pre-eminence of his Master and Guide. So in the *Purgatorio*, he makes Sordello of Mantua address his compatriot Virgil—

“ O thou, the Latins’ pride, whose song  
Showed all the powers of our tongue.”<sup>4</sup>

No troubadour but one born and educated in Italy could have been fitly chosen thus to apostrophize the Prince of Latin poets ; but the sentiment is more suited to Dante himself than to Sordello, who forsook his native land and language, and wrote

<sup>1</sup> *De Monarchiâ*, II. v. 27–29.

<sup>2</sup> *Purg.* vi. 88, 89 (Longfellow).

<sup>3</sup> *Stor. Fior.* viii. 36.

<sup>4</sup> *Purg.* vii. 16, 17 (Shadwell).

in the idiom of Provence.<sup>1</sup> Dante had this in common with Sordello, that both were laymen and both excelled in vernacular poetry, through the development of which the Revival of the classics could alone have become effective. But Sordello belongs exclusively to what I have called the First Renaissance; while Dante, as we shall see, indirectly promoted the Second by his enthusiasm for the writers of antiquity. The fifty or sixty years which separated the literary production of these two poets created the conditions, political and social, in which the Revival of Ancient Learning became possible. The development of civic life in the great cities of Italy crystallized the already strong feeling of the people for their own remote past; the marvellously rapid growth of Italian as a literary medium awakened an intelligent curiosity; while the rise of the universities and the spread of education produced a class of laymen who could challenge the clergy in their own domain. It is at the dawn of the thirteenth century that there are said (doubtless with much exaggeration) to have been 10,000 students<sup>2</sup> in the University of Bologna alone; and that century laid the foundation for the triumph of scholarship in the next. It provided a "public," which, though not itself learned, was able to appreciate the work of Petrarch and his followers. Thus it cannot be too strongly emphasized that the Second Renaissance, like the First, was essentially "a lay movement," although it was concerned with Learning, which had hitherto been the peculiar province of the clergy. To the latter, and particularly to the monastic Orders, we are indebted for the preservation of Ancient Literature in the Dark Ages. But, although there was in their ranks a continuous succession of scholars—sometimes scanty in the extreme, sometimes forming strong centres of light—they could only effect a temporary improvement, which was apt to wane and die away, until the moment came when the laity could claim their share in the common heritage of culture. In order to establish these

<sup>1</sup> Longfellow, in a long note to the previous Canto (*Divine Comedy*, 1877, pp. 378–380) raises the question whether there were two Sordellos—the Troubadour and the follower of Charles of Anjou. But there seems to be no reason for such a conjecture; Gaspary (Oelsner's translation, pp. 54, 341) and Dr. Paget Toynbee (*Concise Dante Dict.*, pp. 498–500) do not even allude to it.

<sup>2</sup> The jurist Odofredus (13th century) is responsible for this statement. Dr. Rashdall (I. 583) reduces the number to 5,000. Cf. the huge figures of Fitz-Ralph as to Oxford in the same century (Anthony Wood, Bk. I. 77).



positions, a brief preliminary survey of scholarship in the earlier ages is indispensable.

Much that is true—though also in part irrelevant and ungrateful—has been written about the ignorance of the clergy in the Dark Ages.<sup>1</sup> It is too often forgotten that, without them, no fruitful relic of the older civilization would have survived. Hallam has compared the Christian Religion to a bridge, which spanned a period of chaos between the ancient and the modern worlds. Without it he considers—shall we say unwarrantably?—that there might have been a new civilized order, in which, however, the achievements of Greece and Rome would have been recalled only by tradition, and their crumbling monuments contemplated with the sort of wonder with which we now regard the Pyramids.<sup>2</sup> The conflict of the Church with Paganism was not closed by a decisive battle, like that which caused the conversion of Constantine. It lasted for at least two centuries, and during that time there were moments when the issue seemed in suspense. We can watch its ebb and flow in the struggle within the soul of Jerome between the claims of sacred and secular learning, or in the Pagan taunts necessitating the last great Christian “Apology”—Augustine’s “City of God.” Augustine had no prejudice against the heathen authors as such, for he regarded the Christian appropriation of their treasures as “a spoiling of the Egyptians”<sup>3</sup>; but it is significant that he “hated Greek”<sup>4</sup>—probably because he found the language difficult. The division of the Empire in his early manhood was the first cause of the rapid decline in Greek scholarship. The final home of Latin literature in the Silver Age was the province of Gaul, where the knowledge of Greek was a vanishing quantity.

Thus the fall of the Empire at Rome left Western culture exclusively Latin; and it is an exception to find Boëthius (died 524)—“the last of the Romans,” who was rather “a Theist

<sup>1</sup> Mainly by Dr. W. Robertson in the introduction to his *Charles V.*; he was answered at great length by S. R. Maitland in his *Dark Ages* (1845), while Hallam in 1848 (*Middle Ages*, iii. 474–479 cr. 8vo ed.) endeavoured to keep an even balance between the disputants.

<sup>2</sup> Hallam (*ibid.*), iii. p. 291.

<sup>3</sup> Origen (*Epistle to Gregory*, I. xxx.) was the first to apply the phrase to the use by Christians of heathen literature and philosophy.

<sup>4</sup> *Confessions*, i. 13, 20



than a Christian " <sup>1</sup>—acquainted with the Greek language and philosophy. Naturally the study of Greek lingered in the south of Italy longer than elsewhere ; and Cassiodorus, the friend and colleague of Boëthius, who founded a monastery in Calabria in his old age, possessed a few Greek manuscripts in the chests of his library and was the first to employ his monks in the labour of copying.<sup>2</sup> His contemporary, St. Benedict, left no directions of this kind ; yet the Benedictine Rule was soon modified to follow the example of Cassiodorus' lost community. Many instances are given in these early centuries of the contempt of the clergy for heathen authors ; and Gregory the Great (the biographer of St. Benedict), who boasts of his ignorance of Greek, not only scorns the rules of Latin Grammar, but reproves a bishop for employing himself in teaching it. His contemporary, St. Isidore of Seville, would allow his monks to read no heathen writer except the grammarians. Here we have an extreme reaction against the danger of Paganism, apprehended as a result of barbarian inroads. Both these bishops were men of high intellect—indeed great scholars for their age ; but they were preoccupied with moralizing the savage races which had invaded Europe, and they knew the power which the old mythology still possessed over the minds of the unlearned. Yet the ignorance of the seventh century, which was the midnight of Italian scholarship, was the direct result of this policy. It was not that the chief Latin authors were ever actually lost, or even ceased to be esteemed as " great names "—rather they were regarded as marvels of dæmonic power and wisdom ; but they were looked at askance as the sources of moral corruption, and any delight in their æsthetic beauty was regarded as a sin.<sup>3</sup>

But as the dread of Paganism grew less and the knowledge of grammatical Latin visibly declined among the clergy, a modification of this obscurantism became imperative. Of the seven " liberal arts " grammar was the foundation, and the ancient authors were still the " staple " of study in the lay-schools of Italy. There they were read purely as " text-books "—

<sup>1</sup> Sandys (*op. cit.*), p. 242. The question of Boëthius' Christianity has been long debated, and even now can hardly be regarded as settled. See the note by Dr. W. Smith to Gibbon (ed. 1872), Vol. V. p. 32. See also Preface to Boëthius' *Theological Tractates*, translated by H. F. Steward (Loeb Series, 1918).

<sup>2</sup> Sandys, I. 250, 251.

<sup>3</sup> Comparetti, I. 226.

without any appreciation of their literary value. But in the northern countries education had passed exclusively into the hands of the clergy; the only schools were those of the cathedral and conventual establishments. For centuries almost every man of intellectual eminence was a member of a chapter or a convent.<sup>1</sup> As Latin gradually grew corrupt and ceased to be a spoken language, the ecclesiastical reasons for maintaining the study of it became overpowering. These were of two kinds, which we may call (1) liturgical, and (2) diplomatic. (1) The Scriptures were known only in the Vulgate, which was the translation of "a lost original"<sup>2</sup>; it was revered even as an authority on the language, because "it was inspired by the Holy Ghost, who knows more than Donatus."<sup>3</sup> The services were conducted entirely in Latin, which became almost a hieratic tongue; the cadences of the chanting were suited only to that language. Even as late as the thirteenth century the clergy preached in Latin,<sup>4</sup> though in the ninth century the Council of Tours (813) ordered that homilies should be explained to the people in their own dialect.<sup>5</sup> It may be questioned whether that practice was then necessary in Italy, where the debased Latin maintained itself to a late date beside the rustic patois. (2) In the same century the rapid development of Papal supremacy in the West produced a constant intercourse between Rome and the northern nations, so that the common use of Latin became as necessary in the Church as French has become in modern diplomacy.

These considerations explain the advent of a kind of "pre-Renaissance" in the age of Charlemagne. But although that movement ultimately served the cause of general enlightenment, it was not intended to progress beyond the ranks of the clergy. It was an effort to "educate the educators" of a privileged class. The new Emperor has been described as the "homo Papae *par excellence*"<sup>6</sup>; his measures left the laity still more under the dominion of the clergy, which was strengthened by the foundation of his new schools. So far as the laity were concerned,

<sup>1</sup> Hallam, *Middle Ages*, iii. 286, 292.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 293. He adds that both learning and religion "derived the utmost advantage" from this mediæval reverence for Latin.

<sup>3</sup> Comparetti (I. 168) quotes this statement of Smaragdus, who was one of the intellectual lights of Charlemagne's Court.

<sup>4</sup> Gebhart (*op. cit.*), p. 129.

<sup>5</sup> Hallam (*ibid.*), iii. 285.

<sup>6</sup> Comparetti, I. 246.

his only object was to enable them to understand the services of the Church. He himself was unable to write, or at least found the art extremely difficult<sup>1</sup>; and the "intellectual Paladins" of his court, whom he summoned from the north rather than from Italy, discouraged secular learning, except as a mere preliminary to religious instruction.<sup>2</sup> Still it is not fair to blame him for this narrowness of aim. It was much that the influence of the first Emperor in the restored Empire should have been mainly intellectual; and an improvement in clerical and monastic learning was bound to produce in time far-reaching results. His successors, Louis the Debonair and Charles the Bald, were also patrons of letters; and in the court of the latter appeared that meteoric genius, John Scotus Erigena, who seems almost out of place in the ages of Faith.<sup>3</sup>

The improvement inaugurated by Charlemagne, however slow, was at least progressive. The Benedictines, especially, became more industrious in forming libraries and in copying books, both sacred and secular; and to their diligence in this respect we owe the survival of so many relics of Latin literature. The manuscript "founts" of almost every classical author have been preserved to us by this means alone; there were no royal or municipal libraries (deserving the name) either in Italy or in the north. But it was in the latter region—at Fulda, Ferrières, and Cluny—that the torch of monastic learning was handed on, in the dark ninth and tenth centuries, by a lineal pedigree of masters and pupils from Einhard and Alcuin, through Rabanus, Lupus, Rémi, and Odo to Gerbert (Sylvester II.)—the first learned Pope for four hundred years. During this period, if we judge only by the names of leading scholars, Italy was eclipsed by her provincial subordinates. Yet they were mere "specks of light" in the surrounding gloom; and Gerbert—a Frenchman and the most gifted scion of the "scholars' tree"—is himself a witness to the extreme scarcity of classical manuscripts north of the Alps and their comparative abundance in Italy.<sup>4</sup> His pre-

<sup>1</sup> Hallam (*op. cit.*), iii. 286 and note.

<sup>2</sup> In his old age Alcuin dissuaded the clergy from reading the heathen poets. He thinks they will be "corrupted" by Virgil's "luxuriant" language, and regrets that a friend is less familiar with the four Gospels than with the *Æneid*. He even speaks of the "lies" of Virgil, and displays a special scorn for the laity.

<sup>3</sup> Bartoli (*Precursori del Rinascimento*, pp. 16, 17) calls him "an exceptional revolutionary" in the Middle Ages.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 130, quoted by Hallam, *Literature of Europe*, I. 7.



eminence in learning and in scientific invention gained him the repute of a sorcerer ; and even those who could rise above such superstition considered him " too much devoted to secular studies." <sup>1</sup> He read and lectured on the chief Latin authors at Rheims and his influence was more extensive in France than in Italy.

Among his pupils were Richer, who studied at Chartres, and Fulbert, who became bishop of that city and died in 1029. The latter founded a chapter school there, which in the next century became the chief centre of classical learning in Europe. Through Bishop Ivo, the pupil of Lanfranc, it descended to Bernard of Chartres (1119-1126), Gilbert de la Porrée and Bernard's brother Theodoric, who were successively chancellors of the cathedral. A little later its most famous pupil was John of Salisbury (1135-1180), who studied under William of Conches and Richard l'Evêque and died Bishop of Chartres. His teachers were probably the best of their age in the twin " arts " of Grammar and Rhetoric. They interpreted " Grammar " in the widest sense ; they did not stop, like most mediæval instructors, at the figures of speech, but led their scholars to see the beauty of the ancient works as " literature " and made them correct each other's compositions.<sup>2</sup> Here we are on the very threshold of Humanism, and hence it was that John of Salisbury became the purest, if not the most graceful, Latinist since the " Silver Age " of Rome. But this was the achievement of a single cathedral school, which perished as its famous teachers died out, and which was soon overshadowed by the subtle logomachies of its rising neighbour, the University of Paris. In his later years John of Salisbury, like Petrarch a century and a half later,<sup>3</sup> was disgusted with the fashionable " dialectic " of his day, which was pursued, not as a means of training, but as an end in itself<sup>4</sup> ; he complains that the professors of all the arts were ignorant of the primary art of Grammar, which alone has the privilege of making a man " lettered."

Contemporaneously with Chartres there arose another school of the same kind at Orleans, the influence of which was prolonged

<sup>1</sup> *Studiis secularibus nimium deditus* (Anon. Zwettling, see Comparetti, I. 225).

<sup>2</sup> R. L. Poole, *Illustrations of the History of Mediæval Thought*, p. 121.

<sup>3</sup> See his letters *F. I.* 6 and 11, translated at the end of Chap. XI. (Vol. I. pp. 446-449).

<sup>4</sup> Poole (p. 220) describes the result as a competition of smatterers and sophists.



till the middle of the thirteenth century. This became known as "the School of Authors" in contrast with Paris, "the School of the Liberal Arts."<sup>1</sup> At Paris Grammar was merely ancillary to the study of Logic and Theology; none of the Latin classics were included in the prescribed curriculum.<sup>2</sup> But the school of Orleans kept alive in the North the study of "Dictamen"—the art of composition in prose and verse, and especially the art of writing Latin letters and briefs.<sup>3</sup> It was thus the "nursery of ecclesiastical statesmen" in the twelfth century, and it produced, besides several Latin poets, the three Papal Secretaries from 1159 to 1185.<sup>4</sup> This art began to be cultivated also in Italy at the close of the same century; and it is curious that one of its first professors at Bologna, Messer Buoncompagno of Florence—who (it seems) was a layman—expresses contempt for "the superstitious teaching of the Orleanists," declaring that he means himself to revert to "the style of the Fathers, the Papacy and the Imperial Court."<sup>5</sup> Here, perhaps, there is a spice of jealousy at the professional eminence of his Transalpine rivals; and they, in their turn, regard the "Lombard" (so the French generally called the Italians) as practising Rhetoric merely for gain, and not from any love of it.<sup>6</sup>

But although the Northerners could point to far greater scholars than Italy possessed from 1100 to 1220, the influence of the rising Universities of Paris and Oxford, with their scholastic predilections, was distinctly unfavourable. There was scarcely any original or creative work; "the mediæval idea of the ultimate foundations of knowledge rarely went beyond knowing what somebody had said about something."<sup>7</sup> While a few schools might contain "clerks," who could imitate their models well enough to produce respectable poems of the "prize" order,<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sandys, I. 649.

<sup>2</sup> Hallam (*Lit. of Eur.* i. 78) says that in the thirteenth century at Paris "Rhetoric" had been given up, which he takes to mean that no classical authors were read.

<sup>3</sup> Bernard Silvester of Tours, who may have studied at Orleans, wrote a manual on the subject (c. 1153), which he called "Summa Dictaminum."

<sup>4</sup> Sandys, I. 648.

<sup>5</sup> Gaspary (Oelsner's translation), p. 43.

<sup>6</sup> Such is the opinion of Henri d'Andely (13th century) in his "Battle of the Seven Arts," which describes an imaginary combat between the forces of Orleans and Paris (J. E. Sandys gives a summary of it, I. 649, 650).

<sup>7</sup> Rashdall, *Universities of the Middle Ages*, I. 433.

<sup>8</sup> Saintsbury, *Flourishing of Romance*, etc., p. 3.

like the "Trojan War" of Joseph of Exeter (*d.* 1210) or the "Alexandreis" of Walter of Chatillon (*d.* 1201) these were merely isolated efforts; they did not imply any deep or widely diffused knowledge of classical antiquity. There was no "life" in these compositions, such as the vernacular of France, both north and south, was beginning to show in the hands of laymen. They could not affect the general low level of the debased Latin used in the disputes of the Schools; and the famous schoolmen of the thirteenth century display even fewer traces of real scholarship than those of the twelfth.<sup>1</sup> Great as was the multiplication of monasteries in the earlier period, they had already begun to leave the control of education to the "secular" clergy; and these were reinforced in the later century by "the coming of the Friars," who established themselves at the centres of learning. Nearly all the scholastic writers of the thirteenth century belonged to the two Mendicant Orders, which—though producing giants of learning—never used the ancients as models for their own writing. The Dominicans especially, who studied Grammar for the purpose of preaching only, were distinguished by the barbarousness of their style.<sup>2</sup>

Yet it is remarkable that, despite these stylistic defects, the North could produce the principal "encyclopædist" of this century, in the Dominican Vincent of Beauvais, and the chief new writers on grammar and prosody, in the Belgian Eberhard de Bethune, the Frenchman Alexandre de Villedieu, and the Englishman Geoffrey de Vinsauf. Vincent quotes as many as 350 authors in his "Speculum Naturale" alone<sup>3</sup>; but the frequency of his mistakes shows that his knowledge was more extensive than profound.<sup>4</sup> The grammarians evolved a scientific theory, which is the foundation of modern syntax<sup>5</sup>; yet it is gravely deficient in the literary sense which can distinguish between classical and mediæval usage. The dominant note of the time is not scholarship, but rather what Dominie Sampson meant by "erudition." The Latin of the Schools was treated

<sup>1</sup> Even in the twelfth Abelard confesses that his quotations from the classics are second-hand (see Comparetti, I. 262, n. 1).

<sup>2</sup> Sandys, I. 559, 560.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* I. 557. There are one hundred more in his two other works.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* Vincent "supposes that there were two authors bearing the name of Sophocles and only one of the name of Seneca, while he actually describes Cicero as a Roman general,"

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* I. 642.

*pari passu* with that of Virgil and Cicero, as if it were a single living language ; whereas classical Latin, in the north at least, was dead beyond immediate hope of resurrection. It had been killed by its degenerate successor, which had been infused with corruptions from the vernacular, now first beginning to be set down in writing.

Such life as mediæval Latin possessed was exhibited at this very time in the rhythmical Latin verse of such noble hymns as the " Dies Irae " <sup>1</sup> and in the satirical parodies (*Carmina Burana*) of the wandering students known as " Goliards," which in their dog-Latin display an astonishing amount of " verve " and literary power. These productions belong entirely to the First Renaissance ; they could never have appeared before the rise of the vernacular literature, and to it their merits are almost wholly due. It is true that their amusing (and sometimes shocking) effect—to us, as doubtless to their first hearers—depends upon their employment of Latin. As Dr. Saintsbury acutely observes : " A language must have been used for a great length of time seriously and on a large variety of serious subjects before it is possible for anything short of supreme genius to use it well for comic purposes." <sup>2</sup> This poetry must have been composed by men who had had a classical education, and yet were interested in the forms of the rising vernacular ; and it must have been originally written north of the Alps, for the earliest specimens of it appear before any Italian poetry existed. The opinion of Burckhardt and Bartoli that it was mainly written by Italians will therefore not bear examination <sup>3</sup> ; it does not appear in Italy till the middle of the thirteenth century—the era of the beginnings of Italian poetry, when the northern vernacular had invaded the peninsula. Much of this rhythmical verse was once attributed to an Englishman—Walter Map,

<sup>1</sup> Said to have been composed by Thomas of Celano in the Abruzzi (*d.* 1255). The " *Stabat Mater* " was written later in that century by Jac. de Benedictis.

<sup>2</sup> *Flourishing of Romance*, etc., p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> L. Geiger, in a note to Burckhardt (Middlemore's translation), I. 243, says that B.'s view (above) " is not tenable," for the poet of the " *Carmina Burana* " calls himself " *transmontanus*," and speaks contemptuously of the southerners. When, however, Geiger says that Italy was " almost unaffected by this class of poetry," he has against him the authority of his countryman, Gaspary (*op. cit.* p. 45), who says that the song " *Vinum dulce gloriosum* " is by the grammarian Morandus of Padua (13th century).



Archdeacon of Oxford ; and another Englishman—Geoffrey de Vinsauf—made the first protest against it in his verse-treatise on Prosody (about 1215).<sup>1</sup> But its earliest home was France or Germany, and its first exponents may have been some graceless students of the new northern Universities. Afterwards it was transplanted to Italy, where hymns had already been composed in rhythmical Latin, and where the railing mockery of the “Goliards” would find an echo in the secular spirit of the lay-schools.

During the period of Northern scholarship which we have just surveyed Italy was distinguished from Transalpine countries by the twofold current of its intellectual life. Side by side with the ecclesiastical schools and the religious Orders, which were all-powerful in the North, there had been in Italy from time immemorial a succession of lay-schools and teachers, which existed nowhere else. Traditionally, at least, they were an inheritance from the old Roman Empire ; the grammarians were said to have continued their course of teaching under the Goth, the Lombard, and the Frank, without serious interruption.<sup>2</sup> In the earlier ages the education imparted may have been far inferior to that of the best monasteries and chapters in the north ; but it is significant that in the eleventh and twelfth centuries bishops allowed their candidates for orders to attend these lay-schools.<sup>3</sup> From this state of things it naturally resulted that while the north produced a few phenomenal scholars, at least a modicum of classical culture was more widely diffused in Italy than elsewhere. The fact is expressly recorded by the chronicler, Otto of Freisingen, when he accompanied his nephew Barbarossa into Italy, during the wars of the twelfth century.<sup>4</sup> The Italians considered that the forms of their civic and municipal institutions were direct links with the system of Imperial Rome ; and they hated the “barbarians”—as they still called all foreigners—for causing what they believed to be but a temporary eclipse of the noble culture and traditions of old Rome. In reality the literature of the Latin decadence had been in great

<sup>1</sup> In his “Nova Poetria.” See Sandys, I. 526.

<sup>2</sup> Gebhart (*op. cit.*), p. 130.

<sup>3</sup> Gebhart says (*ibid.*) that in the eleventh century the Bishop of Verona allowed his “clerks” to attend the lay-schools ; and in the twelfth, Peter Damian regrets that the monks did the same.

<sup>4</sup> In his *De Reb. Gest. Frid.*, ii. 12, quoted by Gaspary (*op. cit.*), p. 43



measure artificial and deserved no better fate ; and the barbarian invasions—like a surgeon's knife removing a malignant growth—had alone made possible the renewal of a healthier life.

Thus Italy clung closely from an intelligible, if mistaken, patriotism to the memories of her glorious past. But for many ages she did not sufficiently understand either the character of the older civilization, or the points in which it differed from her own. The first study, which from its practical advantages became really popular in Italy, was that of the Roman Code of Justinian at Bologna in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. But its first commentators were far from comprehending how much this " *Corpus Juris* " had been modified by the admixture of later customs of barbarian origin. In fact they were necessarily, from no fault of their own, deficient in the historic sense ; and consequently they made bad blunders both in the interpretation of the text and in the historic allusions which appear in their " glosses." <sup>1</sup> We might almost say that this " Law Study " made little direct contribution to the revival of scholarship. But indirectly it was of great service in arousing an intelligent curiosity about Roman institutions—a curiosity which is revealed in the flourishing state of the Universities of Bologna and Padua. The new centres of education from the first had teachers of Grammar and Rhetoric to lay the foundations of legal study ; and although these " elementary " subjects became too subservient to the needs of law,<sup>2</sup> they did something towards raising the general level of culture.

Thus the thirteenth century, when scholarship in France was being choked by scholasticism, witnessed a gradual, though slow, improvement in Italy. Grammar was still hampered by the inability of its professors to distinguish between classical and mediæval Latin and by their almost total ignorance of Greek. Their knowledge of syntax was rudimentary, and they failed to detect the barbarism of countless words and idioms in general use. The reason of this was that the writers of the Augustan age, so far as they were studied at all, were used merely as class-books in grammar—without any intellectual sympathy or true appreciation of their value. The learning of the Middle Ages, especially among the practical Italians, was mainly based on

<sup>1</sup> For some extraordinary instances see Hallam, *Lit. of Europe*, I. 66.

<sup>2</sup> Compare the remarks on this subject in Chap. IV. (Vol. I. p. 105).

compendiums, on the "examples" of the early grammarians, or on "books of elegant extracts" called "Florilegia."<sup>1</sup> Virgil and a few of the works of Ovid and Cicero were occasionally read; Horace,<sup>2</sup> Lucan, Statius, and Juvenal were hardly more than "great names"—just as Chaucer, Gower, and Langland are to-day to smatterers in English literature; and their historical and antiquarian references made them almost as "archaic" as fourteenth-century English is to the modern student.

Symonds speaks of an abortive attempt at the revival of learning by Frederick II. at Palermo.<sup>3</sup> But that enlightened prince was in the main concerned—chiefly by the help of a few foreign scholars<sup>4</sup>—in recovering the lost works of Aristotle through Arabic translations from the Greek. Some writers seem to think that Greek had never disappeared from Calabria and Sicily, and that, as a consequence of the capture of Constantinople in the Fourth Crusade (1204), that language was more studied in Italy in the next half-century than it had been for ages.<sup>5</sup> But it may be questioned whether Italy then possessed any Greek scholar as capable as Robert Grosseteste and John of Basingstoke in England; and there is no evidence that Frederick ever encouraged Greek and Latin study as directly as he did the growth of Italian poetry. There is a prose history of the Trojan War in

<sup>1</sup> See on this matter some excellent remarks by H. O. Taylor, *Classical Heritage of the Middle Ages*, p. 47). The use of these extracts and compendiums tended to discourage the reading of the authors themselves. Many "Florilegia" still survive in manuscript, and some have been printed.

<sup>2</sup> In *De Vulg. Eloq.* II. 6, Dante omits Horace from his list of the "regular" Latin poets, though Sir J. E. Sandys thinks (I. 593, n.) that "Horatium" may have accidentally dropped out before "Statium." But Dr. Moore has shown (*Studies in Dante* (First Series), pp. 199, 204, n.) that Dante knew nothing of the Odes, and only the *Ars Poetica* at first hand, and he suspects that Brunetto's frequent quotations from Horace in lib. vii. of his *Trésor* were mainly derived from "Florilegia."

<sup>3</sup> *Revival of Learning*, p. 68.

<sup>4</sup> Such as Michael Scotus, Hermann the German, and Alfred the Englishman, for whom see Sandys, I. 544-546.

<sup>5</sup> Gebhart (*op. cit.* 136-141) seems (to me at least) greatly to exaggerate the knowledge of Greek in the West in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Sir J. E. Sandys (I. 416) cautiously says that during the fifty-seven years of the Latin Emperors there was "a certain amount of intercourse between East and West," and he shows that the Physics of Aristotle were then brought to Paris. But he also points out (p. 585) that the suspicion of heresy clung to the very language, and that the Dominicans were almost "the only Hellenists," because they "had control of the Inquisition."



Latin by Guido delle Colonne of Messina, which has been said to display a knowledge of Homer.<sup>1</sup> But really that work is borrowed wholesale from the *Roman de Troie* of Benoît de St. More<sup>2</sup>; and its author, who began it in 1272 and did not finish it till 1287, wrote too late in the century to have owed much to the personal influence of Frederick. If Guido be identical, as seems probable, with the Sicilian poet of the same name, he creates a point of contact between the vernacular and a renewed interest in classical subjects. Moreover, he was a "Judex" or legal functionary in his native island, and thus prepares us for the part to be played by the laity in the Revival of Learning.

We may detect the earliest traces of a real Revival in the latter half of the thirteenth century, when men were first struggling to express themselves in Italian prose and poetry, and when the development of political life in the great cities led them to feel the need of a wider culture. It may seem strange that the rise of a vernacular literature should have sent them back to the fountain-head of antiquity; and it is only in Italy that this phenomenon is discernible. The reason seems to be that the throbbing civic life of the period was dimly felt to be a descendant of the old Roman municipal life, and that the citizens had close at their doors the ruins of Rome's imperial grandeur. The influence of the vernacular is seen even in some Latin works. Chroniclers like Fra Salimbene of Parma, though they write in Latin, forget the dignity of their literary medium and almost anticipate the gossiping "Reminiscences" of a far later day. There begins to be a demand for the popular presentation of learned topics in the vulgar tongue. The notary, Brunetto Latini (1210-1294), when driven from Florence with the Guelfs in 1260, employed his leisure at Paris in compiling his encyclopædic *Trésor* in northern French; and in the same generation—probably before his death—this work was translated into Italian by his fellow-citizen, Bono Giamboni.<sup>3</sup> Brunetto himself in his *Rettorica* translated the first book of Cicero's *De Inventione*; the

<sup>1</sup> Gebhart, p. 140. If he means "the Greek" of Homer, the statement is inexplicable and is certainly unfounded.

<sup>2</sup> Benoît's work is charmingly described by Lord Ernle (*Nineteenth Century and After*, June, 1920). He shows that B.'s knowledge is entirely derived from Dares, the inspirer of the "Troy Romance."

<sup>3</sup> He was a "judge" in two different quarters of Florence successively, and wrote between 1264 and 1296 (Gaspary, p. 186).

industrious Bono<sup>1</sup> emulated him by making an Italian compendium of the books *Ad Herennium*, so long attributed to the orator. The translators did not confine themselves to the classics, but made versions of Latin works written by contemporaries. Thus Egidio Romano's *De Regimine Principum* was translated in 1288 from an earlier French version; and the moral treatises of Albertano, a judge of Brescia (written 1238-1245), were rendered into Italian within thirty years by Andrea of Grosseto and Soffredi, a notary of Pistoia.<sup>2</sup> These and other translations of the period were not scholarly or faithful; but at a time when all books were rare, they supplied a want keenly felt by the unlearned. In the Italian cities, as in the ancient republics, "Rhetoric" was recognized as an indispensable aid to government; and Villani praises Brunetto as "the beginner and master in refining the Florentines and in teaching them how to speak well, and how to rule our republic according to policy."<sup>3</sup>

It is most noteworthy that this work of popularizing the literature of learning was entirely the work of laymen. From Brunetto we pass by a natural transition to the greatest layman of the Middle Age, who was also one of its foremost scholars. When Dante, in the seventh Circle of the *Inferno*, addresses Brunetto as the fatherly friend,

"Who taught me how a man becomes eternal,"<sup>4</sup>

he is referring to that new secular learning, to which Brunetto's work had introduced him and which awoke in him the desire for earthly fame. It was a first stirring within him of the new spirit impelling him to attempt a monumental work of art in that young vernacular, which was so foreign to circles of clerical scholars. This unique feat of originality raises him far above his contemporaries; it enables him to survey from a lofty height the achievements of past centuries and, as from this poetic Pisgah, to foreshadow the triumphs of the coming age. For him theology is still the gateway of knowledge. But though he rejoices in metaphysic, he is, like his other lay fellow-countrymen, not content to rest in it; he is more interested in the practical

<sup>1</sup> This is now tolerably certain (Gaspari, p. 181), though the work was once attributed to Fra Guidotto of Bologna.

<sup>2</sup> Gaspari, pp. 184-186.

<sup>3</sup> *Stor. Fior.* viii. 10, quoted by Gaspari, p. 176.

<sup>4</sup> *Inf.* XV. 85, "M'insegnavate come l'uom s'eterna" (Longfellow).



questions of morals and politics. He maintains a sort of equipoise between Reason and Revelation; Reason, he says, "must be free—as in ancient philosophy—the mistress, not the servant."<sup>1</sup> Thus he studies the classics as a legitimate source of knowledge, to which, within its proper limits, homage—even reverence<sup>2</sup>—must be paid. When in Limbo he respectfully salutes the four heathen poets, Homer, Horace, Ovid, and Lucan,<sup>3</sup> it is because he recognizes them (with his Guide) as "the eternal educators of humanity." Such an attitude towards heathen authors is new and "wholly Italian; scholasticism knows nothing of it."<sup>4</sup> In all this we find Dante incarnating the very spirit of the First Renaissance and almost anticipating the birth of the Second.

Yet, after all, Limbo is within the portal of Hell, and Brunetto for some mysterious reason, perhaps belonging to his private life—is imprisoned in one of its lowest Circles. The *Commedia*, in spite of its Titanic intellectual power, seems to us wholly mediæval; it helps us to comprehend the silent ages of darkness immediately preceding rather than the old civilization which they had almost effaced. Though Dante is a layman, he is one who would to-day be classed as "ecclesiastically minded." Despite the wide range of his intellectual interests, he is pre-eminently a theologian and delights in dogma. His genius or his pride may attract us, but we find in him "a strange, solitary spirit, whose thoughts and language are utterly different from our own."<sup>5</sup> He is far less able than ourselves to view the elements of antiquity in their due place and proportion; indeed, like many poets and most modern "mediævalists," he is lacking in the historic sense. Hence arises his peculiar habit of placing side by side illustrations and quotations from Scripture and profane authors "not as of equal authority, but as parallel to one another."<sup>6</sup> The effect upon us is often so bizarre that he almost seems to attribute an objective existence to poetic creations and the personages of mythology. Dr. Moore ascribes this practice to Dante's belief that the Romans and the Jews were equally God's chosen people

<sup>1</sup> *Convivio*, III. 14. See Gebhart, p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> In discussing a passage of Juvenal in *Conv.* iv. 29, Dante remarks, "In this—with reverence I say it—I differ from the poet."

<sup>3</sup> *Inf.* IV. 82-101.

<sup>4</sup> Gebhart, p. 144.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* p. 283.

<sup>6</sup> Burckhardt (Eng. trans.), I. 285. There are instances in *Inf.* ii., xviii., xxx., xxxi., *Purg.* xviii., *Par.* iv. and v., and in *De Mon.* ii. 10.

and their history equally "sacred" to the poet.<sup>1</sup> But this explanation does not account for all the instances which the poem presents. It is almost as if, for poetic purposes, he had brought himself to believe in the reality of such phantoms as the Harpies, Briareus and Antæus, just as a modern child naïvely accepts as "gospel truth" all that he finds in a printed book. We are not forgetting the allegorical symbolism of the poem; but allowing for this, we seem to behold a strange admixture of two conflicting points of view—that which regards the ancient Pantheon with traditional respect,<sup>2</sup> and that which looks upon it as an assemblage of actually existing "demons," whose sway has been abolished and superseded by a Higher Power. The cycles of Christian and Pagan history and legend seem marvellously interfused, not by a mere literary make-believe,<sup>3</sup> but by a system accepting them both as at least poetically true. It is evident that Dante read the classics in a spirit wholly different from ours, and that he "reverenced" them for reasons independent of their æsthetic value. His method belongs to the First, and not to the Second Renaissance; his standpoint is that of an emotional poet, not of a critical man of letters.

Nevertheless it is an enormous advance, not only that he could free himself altogether from the dread of Paganism (still felt, though out of date), but even from that cloud of mistrust which had lain so long and so heavily upon secular studies. He appeared at a moment of transition, when the new spirit was all abroad, but was not yet fully conscious of its freedom. In speculation he was a thorough Schoolman; in scholarship he was more erudite than exact; but by his poetic gift he could take the rusty metal of antiquity (as he saw it) and transmute it into gold. He studied the ancient world, not to find out what it really was or to interpret it to his age, but to furnish himself with illustrative material for his own lofty dreams. Comparetti has observed<sup>4</sup> that, like most mediæval writers, Dante views the classics through a distorting medium, which is due partly to an

<sup>1</sup> E. Moore, *Studies in Dante* (First Series), p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> He even solemnly invokes the help of Apollo at the beginning of the *Paradiso* (I. 13-36). The allusions to Delphi, Marsyas, and Cyrrha make it impossible that this can be allegorical.

<sup>3</sup> As in the sermon which Erasmus heard in Rome on Good Friday, 1509, in which the Pope was referred to as "Jove," and the Passion compared to the self-devotion of Cecrops, Iphigenia, and the Decii.

<sup>4</sup> I. 263, 264.

exaggerated notion of their authority for wisdom, partly to his fondness for allegory.

But his knowledge of them was not so extensive as has sometimes been supposed. Once he names Virgil, Ovid, Lucan, and Statius as the "standard" Latin poets, and soon afterwards Cicero, Livy, Pliny, Frontinus, and Orosius as the chief prose writers.<sup>1</sup> He seldom quotes Horace, except the *Ars Poetica*, and of Ovid he knows little but the *Metamorphoses*. He has studied Virgil deeply, and shows a close acquaintance with three of the works of Cicero<sup>2</sup>; but though he has read some of Livy, his quotations are seldom exact, and he apparently knows nothing at first hand of Pliny and Frontinus. According to Dr. Moore<sup>3</sup> there are quotations or allusions to Virgil's poems about 200 times, to Ovid about 100, to Cicero and Lucan about 50 each, to Statius and Boëthius between 30 and 40 each, to Horace, Livy, and Orosius between 10 and 20 each; and there are a few references to Juvenal and Seneca. This table has of course been compiled from his whole works, and not merely from the "sacred poem." Dante knew no Greek; and his allusions to Greek writers, as Aristotle, Plato, Homer, Æsop, Ptolemy, are either based upon translations or taken second-hand from some Latin author. He shows the usual defects of mediæval scholarship in some passages which he misunderstands, and also in false etymologies and definitions. In his Latin prose his language is "arid when he reasons, and abstract even when his feelings are roused; his style has no personal accent."<sup>4</sup> In short, while he takes some of his matter from the ancients and the form of his thought from the logicians, he rarely strives after beauty of style; indeed he is much less moved by æsthetic considerations in his Latin than in his Italian writings. It is true that we have very little Latin verse from his hand, and not much Italian prose, so that the contrast is hardly fair; but it is sufficiently patent to leave no doubt that if the *Commedia* had been written, as perhaps he once intended,<sup>5</sup> in Latin hexameters, it would have been

<sup>1</sup> *De Vulg. Eloq.* ii. 6.

<sup>2</sup> The *De Senectute*, *De Amicitia*, and *De Officiis*.

<sup>3</sup> E. Moore, *Studies in Dante* (First Series) pp. 4, 5, to whom I am indebted for the foregoing particulars.

<sup>4</sup> Gebhart, p. 318.

<sup>5</sup> The first two and a half lines are given in the suspected letter of Frate Ilario; and Boccaccio (who, however, may rely only on that letter) affirms the fact in his Commentary on the poem.



a comparative failure. True genius knows intuitively what it can do best and keeps within that range ; and so we may be sure that Dante's choice of Italian was determined by personal preference rather than by consideration for the ignorance of the multitude.<sup>1</sup> His statements in different works as to the relative value of the two languages are contradictory<sup>2</sup> ; perhaps he became aware that his studies in scholastic Latin had cramped his powers of expression in Latin verse. But it is his erudition rather than his scholarship which astonishes us to-day ; in this respect he is a phenomenon among contemporary laymen, even in his own country. When we consider that, during the chief period of his literary work, this omnivorous student had no settled home and was constantly moving from one court to another of the princelets of Lombardy, the range of his learning seems almost miraculous.

In the first quarter of the fourteenth century—the very years when Dante was elaborating his great poem—there was a revival of classical studies in northern Italy, with which he was only incidentally connected. The fierce struggles between the great families in that region created a spirit of sturdy patriotism, which expressed itself in deliberate imitation of the Roman poets and historians. The chief centre of this movement was Padua, where the already famous University had been in existence for nearly a century. The jurist Lovato, who was a Doctor of Laws and a magistrate of signal probity, is little more than a shadowy name ; but he was the author of Latin poems modelled on the classics,<sup>3</sup> and Petrarch testifies of him that “ if he had not joined the Twelve Tables to the Nine Muses, he would have been easily the chief poet of our own or the preceding age.”<sup>4</sup> He instilled into his younger contemporary, Albertino Mussato, his own lofty

<sup>1</sup> In the above letter he is made to say it was useless to place the “ hard food ” (of Latin) “ in the mouths of sucklings.”

<sup>2</sup> In the *Convivio* (i. 5-7) he says that Latin is the more noble because it is “ permanent and incorruptible,” and more beautiful than the vernacular because it follows Art rather than custom and can express things beyond the range of its rival ; in the *De Vulg. Eloq.* (i. 1) he says that the vernacular is the nobler because it is more primitive.

<sup>3</sup> He wrote Latin hexameter poems on Iseult and on the Guelfs and Ghibellines, which have perished ; two epitaphs (one on himself) and some manuscript notes on the metre of Seneca are all that survive.

<sup>4</sup> *Rev. Mem.* II. iii. (B. ed. p. 474). The folios here wrongly read “ Donatus,” but Mehus (*Vit. Ambr. Travers.*) had already conjectured “ Lovatus,” before he discovered that this was the true reading of the MSS.



conception of civic duty and fired him with the desire of emulating, in deed and in writing, the old Roman spirit. Mussato represents, like Dante himself, a kind of mixture of Guelf and Ghibelline ideals. He had a strong admiration for the chivalrous Henry VII., to whom he often acted as envoy from his native city ; but when Henry was dead, and Can Grande della Scala of Verona was threatening the liberties of Padua, Mussato vigorously resisted the encroachments of the Ghibelline lord. His tragedy *Eccerinis*, which is modelled on those of Seneca, excited such enthusiasm at Padua that he was publicly crowned with ivy and myrtle (1314) ; it was a stern call to his fellow-citizens not to endure another despotism like that of Ezzelin da Romano, whose cruelty in the previous age had burnt itself into their memories. Mussato died in 1329, having been four years in exile for resisting the "tyranny" of the Carraresi ; and in his later days he composed histories of his own time, in which he avowedly imitates the style and methods of Livy. The practical instinct of the Italians led them to think that the best way of honouring the ancient writers was to treat contemporary topics after their manner ; the attempt, it is needless to say, was rarely successful and may be compared to the notes of the mocking-bird.

Even Dante, the most original of poets, complied with the common mode in writing an allegorical eclogue in Virgil's manner to the Bolognese Professor of Arts, Giovanni del Virgilio. But he naturally declined with a touch of sarcasm the grotesque suggestion of the latter that he should lay aside the *Commedia* and celebrate in Latin verse, for the benefit of students, the recent "exploits" of the Guelf King Robert against the Visconti.<sup>1</sup> The simple Virgilio thought that Mussato, because he was a political "personage" and wrote in Latin, was at least as great a man as the lonely exile of Florence. A poet of the opposite camp, Ferreto of Vicenza (1275-1337), wrote a poem in praise of Can Grande, in which he took the Latin epics for his models. He is a courtier-poet of the type so common in the later Renaissance ; but he bewails the lack of a Mæcnas who would not be unwilling to pay for the immortalizing of his deeds in verse. Since, in Ferreto's later-written history of the period 1250-1318, he speaks with less enthusiasm of Can Grande, it may be guessed

<sup>1</sup> For a complete account of this literary correspondence see *Dante and Giovanni del Virgilio* (1902), by P. H. Wicksteed and E. G. Gardner.

that the latter disappointed him as a patron. His style is more polished than Mussato's, but he is not free from bombast and from a parade of his classical learning. A better historian than either is Giovanni Cermenate (1312), a notary of Milan, who wrote a chronicle in the styles of Livy and Sallust, with fictitious speeches in the ancient fashion.<sup>1</sup> The leading aim of these writers is to assimilate the present to the remote past by clothing it in antique garb; while the true restorers of learning strive to forget their environment, and even to break with its traditions, in an effort to understand and interpret the ancient world.

The works of these lisping Latinists of the early "Trecento," so far as they have survived, are now only read by the curious; but to the literary historian they are representative of a passing phase, which gave promise of better things. At the time no other country but Italy could have produced them—just as no other country could have produced the contemporary *Defensor Pacis* of Marsilio of Padua, of which we have already spoken.<sup>2</sup> Northern scholars were still absorbed in the wrangles of the Schools; but even there it was no time of intellectual stagnation. The supreme authority of the "Latin Aristotle" was already tottering under the assaults of William of Ockham (d. 1347) and his followers; and such scholarship as the North possessed was well represented in each of the rival camps. The chief names are those of Walter Burley (1275–1345) and Thomas Bradwardine, Archbishop of Canterbury (d. 1349); and the leading work of the former illustrates the wide gulf existing between Transalpine and Cisalpine learning.<sup>3</sup> Richard of Bury (d. 1345)—the only intellectual Englishman personally known to Petrarch—was a mere dilettante in comparison with these his more solid fellow-countrymen; but he deserves credit for bequeathing his library to Oxford students and he shows a sense of the vast debt which the literature of Rome owed to that of Greece.<sup>4</sup>

It is thus evident that the period of Petrarch's youth and early manhood was distinguished by a keen intellectual curiosity,

<sup>1</sup> For an account of these writers I am chiefly indebted to Gaspari (Zingarelli's translation, pp. 340–348) and Voigt (Lemonnier's translation, pp. 15–19).

<sup>2</sup> See above, Vol. I. p. 378.

<sup>3</sup> For serious mistakes in his *Lives of the Philosophers*, see Sandys, I. p. 579.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 580.

exhibiting in certain lay circles of Italy even a revived interest in the Latin classics. But these tentative efforts did not amount to scholarship; they scarcely contained the germs of a true restoration of antiquity. As in Ezekiel's vision, the skeletons of the dead past had taken shape and were roughly pieced together, but as yet they bore little human semblance, for "there was no breath in them." They needed a sound scholar to "prophecy over them" with the vivifying power of imaginative enthusiasm, before they could "stand upon their feet an exceeding great army." Such a mission was reserved for Petrarch. The vast difference in the prospects of culture between 1324 (his first year at Bologna) and 1374 (the year of his death) would give us, if we could rightly estimate it, the true measure of his success. In this chapter, however, we are considering him simply as a scholar; we must not anticipate the general conclusions of a later chapter.<sup>1</sup> The first thing to note is the originality of his outlook. He belonged to no traditional school and had sat at the feet of no famous master<sup>2</sup>; his philological equipment was the result of his own private study. The new and fruitful standpoint from which he regarded ancient Letters came from his own large humanity, combined with his imaginative insight and his tenacious memory. Thus the movement which he led has been justly called "Humanism," because it started from a sense of the dignity and independence of man (altogether apart from his eternal destiny), and because it recognized classical literature as a stage, on which man had been able to play his part in complete moral freedom. With Petrarch at least—whatever it became later—the movement implied no revolt against ecclesiastical authority; but he was conscious (and this was the torment of his life) that the freedom which he claimed was inconsistent with the ruling ascetic ideal. He strove to make antiquity, not the mere handmaid of knowledge, but its inspiration, as theology had been for scholasticism. Thus Humanism became to him almost a religious enthusiasm<sup>3</sup> rather than a new code of precepts. The writer who was true to his calling "was bound to be a preacher, to discover truth and to make the truths he found agreeable to

<sup>1</sup> Chap. XLI., "On the extent of his literary knowledge."

<sup>2</sup> See *F.* IV. 16 (Frac. I. 244), where he says that from his boyhood he had been "nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri" (Horace, *Ep.* I. i. 14).

<sup>3</sup> Koerting, p. 461.



the world.”<sup>1</sup> He must not be satisfied with beauty of phrase and expression ; his work, even if modelled on ancient writers, must contain solid thought, suggestive of new ideas. In order to deal with antiquity in this way, a man must be able to regain its atmosphere, to reconstruct the “milieu” of ancient writers and understand the conditions of their time. Of course Petrarch, with his ignorance of Greek, was not fully equipped for such a task ; but his merit is that he was the first to see its necessity, and as far as he could he realized his own ideal. To-day we cannot easily understand what a breach with mediæval practice this new attitude involved. The point of view has been so long familiar to us that we can scarcely imagine mankind without it. Yet the Middle Ages had the same awesome dread of Paganism that they had of mountains, and desired no nearer acquaintance. Bold innovators, like Dante, might dig there for nuggets of wisdom, but felt no need or wish for further exploration.

The humanity which enabled Petrarch to bridge the gulf of ten centuries has been justly said to have been as instinctive in his nature as music to Mozart<sup>2</sup> ; he dared to substitute a passion of familiar affection for this mediæval awe. And with familiarity came—not contempt indeed, but—a certain robust independence. Virgil and Cicero were to him “the two eyes of our language” ;<sup>3</sup> yet he dared to criticize them both, not of course for literary defects, but for their human failings.<sup>4</sup> On the same principle, unlike the Paduan school, he disdained to model his own style on any one or more of the writers whom otherwise he idolized. He explains his principles in this matter in a letter to Boccaccio.<sup>5</sup>

“I had far rather my style were my own, however rugged and uncouth—so long as it corresponds with my mind’s measure-

<sup>1</sup> Symonds, *Revival of Learning*, p. 77. He quotes P.’s striking phrase in *Invect. contra Med.* (B. ed., p. 1205), “Poetæ studium est veritatem rerum pulchris velaminibus adornare.” P. is of course speaking here of his favourite theory (exemplified so strongly in Dante) that true poetry must always be allegorical. Prof. W. P. Ker (*The Dark Ages*, p. 31) and J. E. Spingarn (*History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance*, 1899, p. 261) have shown that there is nothing distinctively mediæval in this theory. It is found in ancient Greece, and even as late as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

<sup>2</sup> Symonds, p. 72.

<sup>3</sup> *Tr. della Fama*, iii. 21. “Gli occhi de la lingua nostra.”

<sup>4</sup> For Virgil see *Sen.* IV. 5, *Africa*, III. 425–427 ; for Cicero, *F.* XXIV.

<sup>5</sup> 2, 3, 4.

<sup>6</sup> *F.* XXII. 2 (*Frac.* III. 124, 125).

ments, like a well-fitting toga—than the ornate garb of some one else of high abilities, which sweeps the ground, but is not suited to my own stature. Every dress becomes an actor, but not every style a writer. Each man must form and preserve his own, lest, if we be unsuitably decked with others' feathers, we be derided like the crow, when the other birds flocked to reclaim their own.<sup>1</sup> Surely, as in face and gesture, so in voice and manner of speaking, we all possess some natural, distinctive traits, which it would be easier and more fruitful to foster and chasten than to change. . . . My favourite practice is to follow the ancients, but not to be for ever fitting my footsteps into theirs. I now and then want to make use of others' writings, not by stealing from them, but as it were 'by leave,' though I should prefer, when I may, to borrow from myself. The likeness, too—when there is one—must not be extreme, but such as illustrates the follower's powers, not his blindness or poverty. I had rather be without a guide altogether than be compelled to follow one through thick and thin; I want one to show me the way, not to drag me behind him in chains, and I must have the use of my own eyes, my judgment and my full freedom."

The result of these principles is a style which, in spite of some solecisms,<sup>2</sup> is more like classical Latin than any that had been written for ages. His object has been truly described as to assimilate his language not so much to the Latin of "the golden age" as to that of antiquity in general.<sup>3</sup> His diction has none of the elegance of Politian or of "the Ciceronians" of Bembo's day; it is lacking in terseness and compression, and the sentences are often inordinately long. But it is lucid and idiomatic, and when his feelings are roused, sometimes rises to eloquence. It is the writing of a scholar, to whom the best models are familiar and who habitually thinks in the medium of his choice. The fastidious Latinists of a later day were inclined to treat it with scorn. Erasmus says that "his diction shows the rudeness of the preceding age"<sup>4</sup>; while Paolo Cortese speaks of his style as "harsh and scarcely bearing the character of Latinity," but he adds, "yet all his writings, however inornate, somehow manage to please."<sup>5</sup> The secret of this success, which escapes his critic,

<sup>1</sup> P.'s knowledge of this "Æsopian" fable is derived from Horace, *Ep.* I. iii. 19. He did not know Phædrus. (*P. et l'Hum.* I. 211.)

<sup>2</sup> K. E. C. Schneider, in his edition of P.'s *Life of Cæsar* (Leipzig, 1827) gives a long list of his faults of style.

<sup>3</sup> G. Voigt (Lemonnier's translation), p. 37.

<sup>4</sup> In his *Ciceronianus*, quoted by Hallam (*Lit. of Europe*, i. 84).

<sup>5</sup> *De Hominibus Doctis* (ed. Galletti), p. 224.

lies in the charm of his individuality, and in what a modern writer calls his "incomparable art of imitation."<sup>1</sup> To the sixteenth century he appeared to be a worse scholar than he really was through the egregious mistakes fathered upon him by the folio editors of his works.

Moreover, we must remember that he was entirely without those helps to scholarship which were accumulated during the fifteenth century by the diligence of his successors. His own industry had to supply the references and "indices" which save so much of the time of modern students; his manuscripts (some of them mutilated and incomplete) lacked the numbering of chapters, sections, and paragraphs which are so great an aid to the memory. Beyond the ancient works of Priscian and Donatus he had only one manual to guide him in the niceties of grammar or in the use of words.<sup>2</sup> We know that when he went to Vaucluse he possessed the *Catholicon* of the Dominican Balbi of Genoa (1286)<sup>3</sup>—a bulky volume containing a grammar and a dictionary alphabetically arranged. This was a costly work, creditable to its age and even showing an elementary knowledge of Greek,<sup>4</sup> but naturally lacking in the orderly system of references, which only became possible in the age of printing. What chiefly astonishes us to-day is Petrarch's accurate knowledge of the chronology of the Roman era and of the order of its writers, in the entire absence of any short history on the subject for the use of students.<sup>5</sup> This knowledge must have been gained at the cost of much toil by making notes and excerpts from the classical authors, as he read them; and he himself

<sup>1</sup> Gebhart (*op. cit.*), p. 319.

<sup>2</sup> He possessed in 1337 the dictionary of Papias the Lombard (10th century), which (according to Sir J. Sandys (I. 501)), draws no distinction between classical and barbarous forms. P. refers more than once in his marginal notes to the lexicon of Hugutio of Pisa, Bishop of Ferrara (c. 1206) and (once at least) to the verse-compendium of grammar (*Grecismus*) by Eberhard of Bethune, but without naming the author. Roger Bacon, in his *Compendium Philosophiæ* (Brewer's ed. 1859, Rolls Series, pp. 446-448), speaks contemptuously of the two dictionaries, but they remained in use till the sixteenth century.

<sup>3</sup> It is in his Vaucluse list (de Nolhac, ii. 294), so must have been used in his early studies. See below, Chap. XXXIV.

<sup>4</sup> So says Hallam (i. 82 2nd n.) in contradiction to Tiraboschi and Eichhorn; Sandys (i. 584) seems to agree with this view.

<sup>5</sup> In his later years P. seems to have possessed the translation by St. Jerome of the *Chronicon* of Eusebius, which he called *Liber de Temporibus*. (de Nolhac, ii. 206.)



gives us proof that it was then often lacking, even among the learned.

He has left us two letters <sup>1</sup> written before 1350 to a Bolognese professor,<sup>2</sup> in which he ruthlessly exposes errors of this kind committed by his correspondent. They are not free from a touch of sciolism, especially as Petrarch must have been aware that he was himself setting a new standard, to which few of his own time were able to conform. The following extracts were penned when his own fame was established, to one whose lectures he had heard, but whom he evidently considers a pretender in the field of scholarship.

"I presume there is hardly any matter of which you can be ignorant; but if there be an apparent exception, I suspect it must be either a slip, or you have spoken in jest. . . . Yet who would not marvel at your calling Valerius the chief of ethical writers—if, that is, you are speaking in all seriousness, and not sporting with me. If Valerius be chief, where, pray, does Plato come? where Aristotle and Cicero? and Annæus Seneca, whom great judges have preferred to all others in this line? Unless, perhaps, Plato and Cicero be excluded by that dictum of yours in another part of your letter which caused me fresh amazement, that they were poets and should be enrolled in the poetic choir! If you can establish this point, you will have done more than you suppose, for by leave of Apollo and with the Muses' applause, you will have added two great denizens to the shady heights of Parnassus. What can have induced you to express such an opinion, since in his earlier books Cicero stands forth so plainly as a supreme orator, in his later as an illustrious philosopher. For just as Virgil is everywhere a poet, so is Cicero nowhere; and we read in the *Declamations* <sup>3</sup> that while the former's felicity deserted him in

<sup>1</sup> *F. IV.* 15 and 16.

<sup>2</sup> These letters were said by Baldelli and Fracassetti to have been addressed to Giovanni d'Andrea; but as their recipient plainly lectured at Bologna in P.'s time (see Vol. I. p. 122), this can hardly be correct. F. Lo Parco (*Dei Maestri Canonisti attribuiti al P.* in *Revue des Bibliothèques*, t. xvi., 1906, 301–318) thinks the Professor was Raniero da Forlì; and, if he can prove his assertion that the letters belong to 1349, when d'Andrea and Pietro Cerniti were both dead, his conjecture is probable. But distinct proof on this point is wanting; and, if they could be dated as early as 1338, I should rather favour Pietro Cerniti, who died in December of that year (see the article on him by Lo Parco in *Giornale Storico della Lett. Ital.* t. LII., 1908, pp. 56–70). It is difficult to believe that P. would write in such terms to d'Andrea, who was a personal friend; but Raniero can hardly be said to deserve the high compliment paid him in *F. IV.* 15 (the first letter below).

<sup>3</sup> P. gives the term *Declamations* to the *Controversiae* of Seneca the

prose, the latter's eloquence forsook him in verse. What can I say of Plato? By consent of the best judges he deserves the chief place in philosophy; for Cicero and Augustine and many more, in every passage where they exalt Aristotle above others, always except Plato. . . . Then from this starting-point, with astonishing eloquence on a subject unfamiliar to you, you plunge head and ears into a discussion on the poets—telling us who they were, what style and type of poetry they adopted, what rank they hold in the scroll of fame. To review all this would take me too long—so many are the things (unheard of before) on which in your eloquent letter you have gratified our thirst for knowledge. But if a word be permitted, not to myself so much as to my literary calling, I do wonder that the names of Nævius and Plautus are so unknown to you that you suppose my insertion of them in my letters is an outlandish idea, and that you even wonderingly reprove me for daring, as Horace says,<sup>1</sup> 'to invent a new character.' You proceed so cautiously, however, that you merely condemn my rashness in bringing new and strange names upon the scene.<sup>2</sup> . . . Yet who, pray, ever heard the word 'poetry' without the names of these men? . . . Again, you assert that Ennius and Statius Papinius were contemporaries. Who can have induced you, father, to adopt such a chronology? If you make careful enquiry, you will find that Ennius lived with Africanus the elder, and that Statius flourished several centuries later under the Emperor Domitian. . . .

. . . "I have noticed in your writings an effort to 'shine' at all costs. Hence comes that roving through volumes really strange to you in order to insert some extract from each in your lectures. Stunned with the names of countless writers, your pupils applaud and call you 'omniscient,' as if you really knew those books whose titles you parade. Scholars, however, can easily distinguish between what you have made your own and what is another's; they can tell what is borrowed or begged or stolen, and know the difference between a deep draught from any

elder, whom he wrongly identifies with the philosopher. Cf. Annæi Seneca *Excerpta, Controversiæ*, lib. iii. § 8, p. 243 (Kiessling). P. inverts the two clauses. See also *Rev. Mem.* I. ii. (Bâle ed., p. 447).

<sup>1</sup> "Personam formare novam." *Ars Poetica*, l. 126.

<sup>2</sup> P. proceeds here to prove that the two writers were poets by allusions to them in the prologues of three of Terence's plays and by references to Cicero (*De Sen.*) and in Aulus Gellius. It is curious that he does not point to the then extant plays of Plautus (eight in number, see de Nolhac, i. 187, n. 2), which certainly became known to him in the decade 1340-1350 if not before. De Nolhac (i. 188) says "about 1350" and Lo Parco (see n. 2, p. 31) asserts that they were discovered in 1347. My own opinion is that he knew them when he was at Verona in 1345 (see below, Chap. XVIII. pp. 352, 353). He quotes Plautus in *F. I.* 10 (see Vol. I. p. 450) which is earlier than 1341.



writer and a passing sip. By the present age you are venerated and renowned in your profession ; aye—if, instead of ‘ irritating,’ I may ‘ lubricate ’ you <sup>1</sup> for awhile—you are sole chief in our time in that department of letters, to which you are devoted. Yet in life’s evening, leaving your own domain and roaming idly at your leisure, you waste your time, with all the ardour of youth, in plucking flowers from other fields. You choose to tread untrodden ways, where you lose yourself or experience a fall ; you love to follow the steps of those who use their knowledge as ‘ window-dressing,’ while the shop behind is bare. . . . Moreover, while you wish to appear ‘ great,’ many incidents are sure to occur, which reduce you to your real stature, or even below it. . . .”

We can scarcely wonder that this severe “ taking down ” roused the bristles of Petrarch’s academic correspondent and produced an indignant answer, to which the poet replied more briefly.

. . . “ I should perhaps act more wisely, if I said nothing ; but I greatly fear that silence would be a fresh provocation. I made you the judge of all that I said or shall say ; and your sentence is, in brief, that my errors are occasional, frequent, universal. I am not sorry to have gone more astray than you ; for every deformity is heightened in a blaze of light, and with age the chances of improvement become desperate. . . . I pass to Plato and Cicero . . . and I congratulate you on being able to behold these, with Aristotle and Seneca and Varro, in the ranks of the poets—which, perhaps, is less absurd of the last three than of the first two. For Aristotle wrote *Poetics* <sup>2</sup> and Varro books of Satires <sup>3</sup> and Seneca tragedies ; and this final class takes the first—or almost the first—place in poetry. But why, pray, did you not make them stage-players too ? since no doubt they did and said something ‘ entertaining ’ in the course of their life—

<sup>1</sup> A play upon words—“ ut non semper pungam, sed interdum ungam ” (Frac. I. 242).

<sup>2</sup> This is the sole reference in P.’s works to the *Poetics*. Dante knew nothing of it, and it is most improbable that P. had ever read it, even in the abridged version by Averroës (12th century), which was translated into Latin by Hermann the German (13th century) and by Mantinus of Tortosa (14th century). See J. E. Spingarn (*op. cit.*) p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> In the “ Colbertin ” MS. at Paris P. adds here that Varro had composed a poem on the quest of the “ Golden Fleece.” But he seems afterwards to have discovered (or remembered) that this translation of Apollonius’ *Argonautica* was by another Varro (Atacinus)—a sure proof that the Colbertin is based upon an earlier original. Marcus Varro’s Satires only survive in a few fragments, some of which P. must have read in Macrobius and A. Gellius (see de Nolhac, ii. 112).



especially Cicero, of whom much that would raise a laugh is recorded in the *Saturnalia*, and his freedman Tiro even wrote a book on his patron's jokes.<sup>1</sup> Why not call them fishermen or oarsmen, or what you will, for in their lonely hours they doubtless relieved their minds by casting a hook or pulling a boat? Would you have us introduce the military fashion into the schools, with the result that as one war made men 'Torquati' or 'Corvini,' so one speech should make a poet? Constant practice is needed; one act does not make a habit. So far as to this point. In your last letter nothing is said of Ennius and Statius—I suppose you have computed their dates upon your fingers. Finally, in reply to that long rigmarole of your letter, in which you maintain that my cautions must be unjust because nothing is beyond your talents, I will only say that it is well for you to have so exalted an opinion of yourself. Happy indeed are you in such sentiments! Would that you would teach me that art of magnifying personal pretensions! I am not sure that it is not better to rejoice in one's own blunders than to trouble oneself about the actual facts." . . . .<sup>2</sup>

Petrarch was not satisfied with demolishing the pretensions of would-be encyclopædists; he was anxious to lay a solid foundation for a comprehensive and scientific knowledge of antiquity. We can scarcely conceive how Herculean was such a task in the fourteenth century. To-day, after nearly five centuries of printing and the labours of countless scholars, we know exactly how we stand; and although the sands of Egypt have recently yielded a few precious relics, it is hardly likely that much written literature of importance remains to be discovered. But in Petrarch's time, no one knew what treasures might be lying hid in the neglected presses of secluded monasteries; and none but a man of exceptional learning and experience would know whether a work were rare or common. Boccaccio, for instance, had access to a MS. of Tacitus—a work entirely unknown to his "master," Petrarch; but there is no evidence that he communicated his discovery to the latter.<sup>3</sup> Catalogues of the monastic libraries were either non-existent or compiled in a slovenly and inefficient

<sup>1</sup> He gets this from Macrobius, *Sat.* II. i. 12.

<sup>2</sup> *F.* IV. 16. The end of the letter is quoted in Vol. I. p. 137.

<sup>3</sup> He had the latter part of the *Annals* and the *Histories* in the manuscript "Mediceus II." See Hortis (*Studi sulle Op. Lat. del. Boccaccio*), pp. 424-426, and de Nolhac (ii. 43-45), who attempts to account for P.'s ignorance of his friend's discovery.

way ; <sup>1</sup> and the monks were often unwilling to allow an inspection of their contents by strangers. If we take Cicero as a general example, we find that in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries his letters were little known <sup>2</sup> ; his speeches were much less common in France than in Italy, <sup>3</sup> and even in the latter country his philosophical works (and of these chiefly the shortest) were alone really familiar. Petrarch's contemporary, Walter Burley, gives a long list of Cicero's compositions ; but it is plain that he had not read, or even seen, many of those whose titles he enumerates. <sup>4</sup> Our poet himself did not meet with the *Philippics* and the *Pro Milone* till he was advanced in life <sup>5</sup> ; and he deploras the apathy of his own age in studying the great orator, which he attributes to the "love of money." <sup>6</sup> From the same cause the professional "scriptores" would not multiply copies of the ancient writers until there was a larger demand for them. <sup>7</sup> The times needed a munificent patron, with unlimited funds and an army of correspondents in different countries ; and it was only the assured fame of Petrarch and the enthusiasm transmitted by him to his followers, which at length created that demand. We have seen how his early travels were undertaken partly with the object of searching for manuscripts <sup>8</sup> ; and the following letter—written perhaps about 1346 <sup>9</sup>—shows that at that time he was devoting much of his correspondence to the same end.

<sup>1</sup> See the account by Boccaccio of his visit to the abbey of Monte Cassino, in the *Commentary* by Benvenuto da Imola on Dante's *Paradiso*, XXII. 75.

<sup>2</sup> Sandys, pp. 623, 624.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 490, 604. The library of the Sorbonne had 24 MSS. of parts of the *Opera*, but apparently no speeches (p. 625).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 624.

<sup>5</sup> See *F.* VII. 16 (date 1349), XII. 8, XVIII. 12. *Var.* 45. Cf. also Voigt (trans. Lemonnier), p. 43.

<sup>6</sup> See *F.* XXIV. 4—his second letter to Cicero (translated, Chap. XVIII., below).

<sup>7</sup> Hallam (*Lit. of Eur.* I. 80) says that the MSS. of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, though more numerous, are more incorrect than those of earlier date. For this see P.'s letter on the scarcity of copyists (*F.* XVIII. 12).

<sup>8</sup> See Vol. I. p. 302.

<sup>9</sup> *F.* III. 18. The folio editors suppose that it was addressed to his brother Gherardo. But this is plainly impossible, for the Carthusians were not a learned order and the correspondent is clearly an Italian "religious." Mehus (and Fracassetti, *It. i.* 464) discovered that in the Passioneian MS. at Rome it is inscribed "Fr. Johanni Anchisæo." Baldelli (p. 256) says that he was a doctor in theology and prior of the convent of St. Mark at Florence, then inhabited by the Silvestrines. He was a cousin of P., who probably made his acquaintance during his Italian visit 1343-1345. See Chap. XIX.

... "One unquenchable longing has the mastery of me, which hitherto I neither could nor would repress; for I flatter myself that a desire for things honourable is no dishonour. The malady I mean is an insatiable craving for books, although, perhaps, I already have more than I ought. While with books, as with other things, success only augments cupidity, yet with books there is something peculiar. Gold, silver, jewels, purple raiment, fine houses, broad acres, paintings, caparisoned steeds, afford a dumb and superficial pleasure. Books, however, delight us to the marrow; they advise us and talk with us and treat us with a bright and witty familiarity. Nor does each ingratiate itself by its own merit alone, but suggests the names of more, and one begets a desire for another. For example, the *Academics* of Cicero endeared to me Marcus Varro; from the *De Officiis* I first heard the name of Ennius; the *Tusculan Disputations* first imbued me with the love of Terence. . . .<sup>1</sup>

"It is no marvel then (to return from my digression) if books enkindle and inflame our minds, both openly by their own warmth and attractiveness, and secretly by furnishing the names of others contained in them. So I frankly and truthfully confess—though I blush for it—that the coveting of them first by Pisistratus, afterwards by Ptolemy Philadelphus appears to me nobler than the avarice of Crassus, despite the fact that the latter has had many more imitators. But there is no ground for Alexandria or Athens—for Egypt or Greece—to exult over Rome and Italy. We, too, have had our learned Emperors—so many that it is hard even to count them—so devoted to study that there was one to whom philosophy was dearer than Empire<sup>2</sup>—men, I say, who loved not books in themselves, but rather their contents. (There are some, of course, who amass books not for use but from the lust of possession—not as an assistance to their wits, but as an ornament to their rooms.) To pass over others, the 'divine' Julius and Augustus made provision for a Roman Library; the former set over it Marcus Varro—a man (with all deference to Demetrius Phalereus, of whom the Egyptians thought so highly) in no way his inferior, but rather far above him; the latter appointed Pompeius Macer, a man of great learning. Asinius Pollio, the celebrated orator, was most enthusiastic

<sup>1</sup> The omitted passage contains fourteen more instances of ancient works, of which the names were suggested to P. by other writers. The statement, "I trusted to Seneca for Cicero's letters before I saw them with my own eyes," may indicate (if not interpolated) that it was not written till after his discovery in 1345 (see Chap. XVIII.). From P.'s MS. of Livy (still extant at Paris) we know (as he hints here) that it expressly ascribes the epitome of the lost books to Florus; but the authorship is far from certain. The phrase, "florentissima brevitās," makes it unlikely that P. is referring to Florus' history.

<sup>2</sup> Evidently Marcus Aurelius.



about his Greek and Latin library ; and he was the first to throw one open to the public at Rome. And there are other private instances ; there is Cato's insatiable hunger for books, to which Cicero bears witness, and there is the ardour of the orator himself in sending for them—testified in so many letters to Atticus, whom he urges to the task with as much insistence and entreaty as I am employing towards you. If a man of such rich endowments submits to 'hand the hat round'<sup>1</sup> for such a purpose, what may not be permitted to a beggar ?

" Let this be an excuse for my offence ; I have at least the comfort of famous companions in crime. If you love me, lay this charge upon a few trusty and lettered men. Let them ransack Tuscany, and turn over the chests of the religious orders and other studious persons, to see if anything can be found to appease or (shall I say ?) to whet my thirst. Finally, though you are aware in what lakes I am wont to fish and in what woods I go a hawking, yet—that there may be no mistake—I enclose in this letter a separate list of my chief 'desiderata' ; and to make you keep a closer watch, let me tell you that I have addressed the same entreaties to other friends in Britain, France, and Spain. Pray do your utmost not to yield to them in faith and diligence."

The most remarkable feature of this letter is the ascetic flavour of the terms of its request. Writing (probably) to a relative who belonged to the Benedictine order,<sup>2</sup> Petrarch thinks an apology needed for his craving for ancient literature ; but he feels sure of the sympathy and assistance of his correspondent in gratifying it. At the same time he hints that the chief benefactors to study were those princes who formed libraries for public use, and thus foreshadows the offer of his own library in his old age to the Republic of Venice. In a curious passage of the *Remedies for both kinds of Fortune* (written about twelve years later) he seems to deprecate the accumulation of books in private hands, and speaks of such books as being "in chains" and "weeping" that they were not available for poorer students.<sup>3</sup> The idea was new at the time, and could not be developed till after the invention of printing ; but it testifies to a growing demand for reading facilities, while books were still scarce and dear. The nearest

<sup>1</sup> The original is "librorum patrocinia mendicare" which cannot be literally translated.

<sup>2</sup> The Silvestrines, to whom Fra Giovanni belonged (see n. 9, p. 35), were a branch of the Benedictines.

<sup>3</sup> *De Rem. Utr. Fort.* I. Dial. 43. The whole chapter is a curious illustration of P.'s latent asceticism.

approach to a public library was that of the Sorbonne<sup>1</sup> in Paris, which then contained about 1,300 volumes; but it was only open to students in theology, who attended lectures in that college, and the more valuable books (as in many later libraries) were chained to desks, so that they could not be taken away. The development of Italian Humanism in the next century has been called "anti-popular" in tendency<sup>2</sup>; it is therefore all the more creditable to its founder that he wished the benefits of the "new learning" to be open to all. The secret of his success in making it popular was that he was fundamentally a poet rather than a pedant.<sup>3</sup> His devotion to an ideal and his humane warmth of feeling enabled him to communicate his own enthusiasm to an ever-widening circle. If he wished for many books, he regarded them not as a collection of musty parchments, but as an assembly of the learned of all ages, with whom he could freely converse under his own roof.

At the same time he did not disdain the use of what we should now call "classical archæology." He made a collection of ancient coins and medals and admired the skill of their designers.<sup>4</sup> He almost anticipated the modern sentimental attachment to the ruins of a remote past, and as we have seen,<sup>5</sup> he showed keen solicitude in 1337 at the devastation then being wrought among the remains of ancient Rome. In such matters he was far in advance of his age and had no immediate successors.<sup>6</sup> In spite of his bookish bent, his frequent travels gave him a practical experience of men and of the needs of the time, which continually stood him in good stead. The explanation of his astonishing influence in middle life was his union of great learning with that "touch of nature" which "makes the whole world kin." So humane a love of letters for their own sake was a new phenomenon

<sup>1</sup> In 1289, 1290, when the first catalogue was made, it consisted of more than 1,000 volumes (worth 30,000 livres), and it had so much increased in 1292 that there had to be a second catalogue.

<sup>2</sup> Burckhardt (Eng. trans.) I. 241. Cf. Symonds, *Revival of Learning*, p. 543.

<sup>3</sup> See *P. et l'Hum.* i. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *F.* XIX. 3 (his present of coins to the Emperor Charles IV.).

<sup>5</sup> See above, Vol. I. p. 342.

<sup>6</sup> In this matter Petrarch was superior to Erasmus. M. de Nolhac notes (i. 15) that the latter during his three visits to Rome (all, however, within three months of 1509) makes no remark on a single ancient monument.

and was so attractive to his younger contemporaries that they were seized with an uncomprehending desire of emulation.

This sudden enthusiasm for intellectual achievement naturally had its disadvantageous side, which we cannot appreciate without anticipating events to be related in succeeding chapters. Petrarch, when he had received the laurel crown on the Capitol, found that he had unwittingly "set a new fashion" and that a crowd of aspirants to fame were jostling in his wake, who did not realize the patient toil and study needed for success. Every smatterer in the new-found realm of ancient letters now considered himself qualified to assume the poet's mantle and looked to "the laureate" for counsel and support. Writing to a French Benedictine abbot<sup>1</sup> he complains of the inconvenience he suffered from this poetic frenzy.

"The 'passion for scribbling,' as the Satirist calls it,<sup>2</sup> is incurable and even contagious. . . . Within my memory there were few who wrote (poems); now few write anything else. In the opinion of some the blame for this contemporary disease lies at my door. Not unjust, I fear, was the lament of the old 'paterfamilias,' who accosted me sadly and almost in tears: 'Though I have ever been a lover of your name, see what a return you have made me; you have caused the ruin of my only son.' At first I blushed in amazement; the age and the appearance of the man, with its signs of serious trouble, affected me; then, recovering myself, I replied—as was the fact—that I knew neither him nor his son. 'What does it signify?' he retorted, 'whether *you* know *him*? Certainly *he* knows *you*; and though at great expense I had put him to the study of the Civil Law, he prefers to follow in your steps. Now I suppose he will make neither an advocate nor a poet.' These words led me and the bystanders to laugh; but he went off as gloomy as before. Now I recognize that we owed him not laughter, but compassion and comfort, and that his reproaches were not unfounded. . . . We all follow one pursuit, and the saying of Horace is true enough:

'Gentle and simple, sage and fool alike,  
We all write poems.'<sup>3</sup>

It is a poor sort of comfort to have found many companions in

<sup>1</sup> F. XIII. 7 (to Pierre de Rainzeville). He was abbot first of St. Benigne near Dijon, afterwards of St. Rémy; the date is 1351 or 1352.

<sup>2</sup> "Cacoethes scribendi," Juvenal, *Sat.* VII. 52.

<sup>3</sup> Horace, *Ep.* II. i. 117.



distress ; I had rather be the only invalid ; now I am involved in the ills of others as well as in my own and scarcely get a chance to breathe. Day after day epistles and poems are rained from every corner of the world upon my devoted head ; I am beaten down by storms of letters not only from France, but from Greece, from Germany and from Britain—made the arbiter of all men's talents, though incompetent to judge my own. If I were to answer them all, I should be the busiest man alive. If I condemn the production, I am 'a malignant censor' ; if I praise, 'a bland liar' ; if I say nothing, 'an insolent coxcomb.' . . . To crown all, this recent insidious disease has invaded—incredible though it be—even the Roman Curia itself. . . . Carpenters, fullers, peasants leave their ploughs, or whatever are the tools of their trade, and prattle about Apollo and the Muses. The universal prevalence of this plague, so lately confined to a few, passes description. . . . Hence the result—which perhaps you welcome, but to me is disgusting—that in every thoroughfare you see poets, but in Helicon itself hardly one ; for they all nibble at the Pierian honeycomb, but not one digests it. . . .

"Wherefore, as I said, my conscience pricks me that I may have myself in great part fed the flame of all this madness and done harm by my example—in itself no small cause of offence.<sup>1</sup> . . . If so, I am rightly served and punished for my crime ; for I sit raging at home and scarcely dare venture into public view. When I do, frantic fellows rush up and accost me ; they take me by the button, instructing, arguing, wrangling on points of taste unheard of by the Mantuan shepherd or the old man of Mæonia. Meanwhile I fume, and begin to fear that I may be haled before a magistrate and found guilty of 'corrupting the republic.'<sup>2</sup> . . . I have now retired to that solitude at the source of the Sorgues,—where, whether it be that the air makes men less susceptible of foreign impressions, or that the sequestered, closed valley (as it is called) shuts out the alien miasma,<sup>3</sup> no one has yet been infected by my poetic virus, unless it be my bailiff, who in his old age begins, as Persius has it, to

'Dream on Parnassus' twin-crowned steep.'<sup>4</sup>

If it should ever spread here, all would be over. Shepherds,

<sup>1</sup> Here he adds a fear that the immature boughs of his laurel crown, which he had too eagerly plucked, may have caused delusive dreams in others. The laurel, as we shall see, had nothing to do with his Italian poems.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Robinson (p. 168) translates here "breaking the peace," which is a mere paraphrase ; surely P. is furtively suggesting the very charge for which Socrates was condemned.

<sup>3</sup> I take the reading "auras" of the Colbartin MS. ; Fracassetti reads "curas."

<sup>4</sup> *Prologue to the Satires*, l. 2.

fishermen, hunters, ploughmen—aye, the very cows will ‘low in numbers’ and chew the cud of poetry.”

This description, which in the original extends to much greater length, is of course hyperbolic and indited for his friend’s amusement; but it undoubtedly depicts one of the frenzied moods of passing fashion. At first sight we might imagine that it refers to verse-making in the vernacular rather than in Latin, for Petrarch was an acknowledged master in both. Yet the scene of the public “baiting” of the laureate is laid, not in Italy, where lyric poetry was widely practised, but at Avignon, where Italian was only spoken in the highest circles. There are other indications throughout the letter that Petrarch is mainly referring to efforts in Latin verse, though his assertion that it was attempted by the lower orders is a manifest exaggeration. But his statement that it had “invaded even the Roman Curia” must, I think, be an allusion to a recent experience of his own.

Bernard d’Aube (or d’Alby), the French Bishop of Rhodes, had been raised to the purple by Benedict XII., and had been employed by that Pope and his successor on various diplomatic missions.<sup>1</sup> On his return from the last of these he began, though advanced in years, to amuse his leisure by the composition of Latin poetry. Petrarch had heard of this hobby and addressed to him a letter in Latin hexameters,<sup>2</sup> encouraging him to persevere and enclosing a gift of the commentary of Servius on Virgil, with apologies for its being defaced and “yellowed” by age. The letter is respectful and anticipates success from the Cardinal’s studies, but it is written in rather a patronizing tone. Clearly Petrarch did not know his man, at least intimately. The Cardinal responded with a pretentious epistle, full of glaring faults in metre and prosody, yet boasting freely of his own powers. He invited the “Laureate” to write (apparently on the spot) a poem upon the world of nature—especially on astronomy—and perhaps hinted that he would tackle the task himself, if Petrarch declined it. The latter’s reply<sup>3</sup> contained much covert satire, but is

<sup>1</sup> Benedict sent him to reconcile Castile and Portugal; and soon after his return Clement employed him as mediator between Aragon and Majorca.

<sup>2</sup> *Ep. Metr.* II. ii.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* II. iii.

not as yet openly contemptuous. He excuses himself from complying with the invitation, partly from the heat of the summer, but still more from the noise and bustle of Avignon, which he describes in several spirited lines. He urges with some unction that the study of the soul, with which he is chiefly concerned, seems to him far more important. But while protesting his ignorance of geography and astronomy, he cannot refrain from setting forth some of the things which he does know.<sup>1</sup> He speaks disdainfully of the vulgar fables of astrology to which the Cardinal was addicted, and recommends him to fix his attention on moral philosophy. In his first letter Petrarch had spoken of "the nine sisters" (the Muses) preparing a garland for the Cardinal's red hat, and had received the retort that the latter thought more highly of "the seven sisters"—the so-called "liberal arts,"<sup>2</sup> which supplied the foundation of all knowledge. Petrarch excuses himself from comparing the merits of the two "female choirs," but explains what "the nine" had done for himself. He concludes with a plain hint (asking pardon for the same) that his correspondent had better begin with the elementary rules of metre and prosody—a task which Augustus was not ashamed to undertake, though the master of the world.

The last of the three verse-letters<sup>3</sup> is in a more mordant vein, and we can scarcely suppose it was ever dispatched. The Cardinal had sent him 370 verses, which he boasted he had "tossed off" in an hour; and Petrarch, in mock despair, says that he cannot cope with such fecundity. His mind reels in computing what the Cardinal, at this rate, could do in a month or a year. He must be far superior to Virgil, who left his great poem unfinished. Petrarch contrasts his own persistent effort to polish and perfect his verse, and says that he always has an eye to the future and to posterity. He begs the Cardinal to excuse his trying to compete with such a lightning speed. Then he continues :

<sup>1</sup> In ll. 83, 84, he alludes to two views about the Sun—(1) that it is the centre of created things, and (2) that it takes the second rank after the "æther." P. attributes the first (which he gets from Firmicus Maternus) to Archimedes, the second to Plato.

<sup>2</sup> That is, the *Trivium* (Grammar, Dialectic, Rhetoric) and the *Quadrivium* (Music, Arithmetic, Geometry, and Astronomy).

<sup>3</sup> *Ep. Metr.* II. ii., iii., iv.



"I saw and marvelled at 'the sudden poem,'  
 'This bard,' I murmured to myself, 'must be  
 The Muses' Emperor, Lord of Helicon,  
 So various are his measures, 'tis a task  
 Too great to count them' . . . nor do they combine  
 With one another, but straggle all apart.  
 One line's of three feet, and the next of four;  
 This swiftly flies with six, that limps with one;  
 They're meant to march in rank—and yet the swift  
 Waits for the laggard panting in the rear."<sup>1</sup>

Finally, Petrarch recants his previous encouragement; he says plainly that natural gifts are necessary for poetry, and that legal attainments are injurious and distract the mind from its pursuit. The Cardinal's literary credit and his methods in verse are his own concern; let him entertain himself with his "swift Muse."

It is not unlikely that by the French interlocutor, seeking Petrarch's aid in his Fourth Eclogue, which was written about the same time as the letters, is meant this Cardinal,<sup>2</sup> who became afterwards Bishop of Porto and died on November 13, 1350. The main thesis of the Eclogue is the very point which Petrarch presses upon his correspondent in the third letter—that poetry is a natural gift,<sup>3</sup> which must be cultivated in youth and cannot be pursued as a pastime in a man's declining years. In the Eclogue the Italian shepherd tells the French that it was not becoming for age to acquire a gift, which might have been fitly learnt in earlier life; and he therefore bids him leave the lyre which he covets to those who have had long practice in the art. Certainly there is no proof that the Cardinal ever asked for the

<sup>1</sup> II. iv. ll. 40–50.

<sup>2</sup> Rossetti (I. 59, 263; II. 293, 416) makes this suggestion; the old interpreters, Donato and Benvenuto, say that the "Gallus" is Philippe de Vitry, Bishop of Meaux. When A. Hortis in 1874 (*Scritti Inediti di F.P.*) published a new interpretation (which he held to be by P. himself) to the same effect, the argument for the older view seemed conclusive. But A. Avena (*Il Bucolicum Carmen e i suoi commenti inediti in Padova in onore di F.P.* 1906, t. i.) has now shown that this interpretation is not by P. but is closely related to Donato's; and before his book appeared, I had felt confident that the identification of "Gallus" with de Vitry could not be sustained. "Gallus" was a man advanced in years and without literary experience. Philippe was no older (possibly even younger) than P.; he was skilled in music and besides translating Ovid's *Metamorphoses* into French, he is said (by Camerarius) to have written a Latin poem on rural life. P. thought most highly of him, except for his disdain of Italy (see *F.* IX. 13 and XI. 14); and it is not the thesis of Eclogue IV. that poetry was the "private preserve" of Italians.

<sup>3</sup> *Ep. Metr.* II. iv. ll. 54, 55—"Natura poetam Protulerat."

poet's help ; he seems rather to have believed that he could write as well, or better, without it. But Petrarch was the last person to suppose that an imaginative composition such as an Eclogue must be in full accord with the facts.

Yet it was not by his poetic gifts, great as they were, but by his accurate knowledge of the past that Petrarch was to leave the strongest impress upon succeeding ages. He aspired to the renown both of poet and of scholar, and he has achieved his aim ; but in the former case by means of the Italian lyrics that he slighted, not through the production of a monumental Latin epic. If to-day we remember him chiefly as the singer of unrequited love, this is because the services he rendered to scholarship have been obscured by the very success which rewarded his enthusiasm for antiquity. It is the common fate of the pioneer ; men are apt to forget that the first step is the hardest to take, and they " invariably," as has been truly said,<sup>1</sup> " undervalue what they feel they cannot lose." If " Classical Scholarship," according to the borrowed definition of Sir John Sandys,<sup>2</sup> is " the accurate study " of the language and literature of the classics and of " all that they teach us on the nature and history of man," then Petrarch, with all his limitations, was the first for many centuries to deserve the name of " a scholar." He seems, like Prometheus, to have stolen the " sacred fire," so long jealously concealed, and to have communicated it to posterity. If the need for comprehending the spirit of antiquity could not have been felt till after the rise of vernacular literature, as in this chapter we have tried to show, it is also true, conversely, that the wealth of modern literature could not have been produced till mankind had first " gone to school " to the ancient world.<sup>3</sup> The work of leading the way to this lost school was necessarily a " literary " work ; it had to be performed by " a man of letters," who was able to maintain an independent attitude towards the customary studies and methods of his day. No such individual had hitherto appeared ; for none had had sufficient knowledge to appreciate " the best that had been thought and said " in ancient Rome. Men of letters to-day have a far wider field to work in. Not only

<sup>1</sup> Symonds, *Revival of Learning*, p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. I. p. 2—apparently quoted from Mark Pattison's book on the subject (1886).

<sup>3</sup> Symonds, *Revival of Learning*, pp. 54, 55.

is our knowledge of antiquity far more complete ; but each nation in the European family has its galaxy of literary lights spread over five centuries of past achievement. In the fourteenth century a man of letters was compelled to focus his attention on the best Latin literature. Since Greek was closed to him, there was little else deserving of the name of " letters " on which he could mould his thought and his style.

The objection has sometimes been advanced against Italian Humanism that it stopped the creative work in the vernacular which produced the *Commedia* and the *Decameron*, and condemned the best Italian intellect of the fifteenth century to the slavish task of discovering manuscripts, settling ancient texts and compiling dictionaries and commentaries. Yet this " school-master's work," to which Italy devoted her leading minds for a century and a half, was an indispensable stage in the reappropriation of antiquity. To start such a movement, amid the deadening frosts of mediæval custom and ecclesiastical prejudice, required an amount of intellectual force equal, at least quantitatively, to high creative power. Moreover, periods of creation and of acquisition, of romanticism and of classicism, have necessarily alternated in the history of literature. It seems as if the intellect needs periodic relaxation, during which it can appraise and absorb the best that the past has to give. Knowledge and culture—our own age, perhaps, needs the reminder—are as requisite as startling originality for the production of the highest kind of thought.

For his services in this respect Petrarch has been justly hailed as the prophet of a new era and has been compared with Erasmus and Voltaire.<sup>1</sup> Erasmus might indeed be called " the Petrarch of the northern nations," and Petrarch be regarded as the " Voltairian satirist," who exposed the pretensions of the scholastic Pharisees of his day. But such comparisons are apt to be superficial and to ignore fundamental differences of temperament and outlook. In classical acquirements Petrarch was of course far inferior to Erasmus ; and although a critic and an iconoclast in his study his position compelled him to be more observant of " the conventions " than Voltaire. He had the peculiar weaknesses of the man of letters, as vanity, irritability

<sup>1</sup> See Gebhart, p. 326 ; also Robinson and Rolfe, pp. 9-11.



and an indisposition to distinguish between the ideal and the practical. He judged the outer world too much by a student's standard ; and his ignorance of Greek history and letters, except through the medium of Latin writers, combined with his love of Rome to make him misuse the critical faculty which he possessed.<sup>1</sup> These failings were not only inevitable in his time ; they were also " the defects of his qualities." He was at once receptive and impulsive ; and some of the inconsistencies in his letters and in his moral and political views may be due to the fact that with the fresh knowledge that he was continually gaining, he frequently altered his judgments of men and things. In the preface to his chief collection of letters he admits these contradictions, and rather lamely ascribes them to his being obliged to address people of different characters.<sup>2</sup> It would have been a truer defence to confess that he had written too much to be invariably consistent ; and he might justly have added that the art of criticism was too new for him to expect his first judgments to be final.

Curiously enough, his influence has been most potent and lasting in the sphere of education—a department of practical work in which he had little personal experience, and on which he formulated no systematic theory. Yet his example alone produced a reform which profoundly modified the system of the Middle Ages ; " out of Humanism," as M. de Nolhac says, " the humanities were to rise." <sup>3</sup> The Italian demand for a wider and more liberal culture began in his youth and continued throughout his life, although the most fruitful changes could not be introduced till after he had passed away. New Universities were founded all over the peninsula, some of which solicited his help or advice. The dates of their establishment—Fermo (1303), Perugia (1307), Pisa (1333), Florence (1349), Siena (1357), Pavia (1369)—are sufficient to prove how widespread was the movement. The citadels of the old formalism did not yield without a struggle ; the traditional system prevailed for a time even in these new foundations. It was not till the end of the century,

<sup>1</sup> Gebhart (p. 317) justly accuses him of this because he exalts the Latin writers whom he admired above the Greeks, whom he could not read. See *F.* VI. 4 (translated Vol. I. p. 455) and *Dial.* II. of the *Secret* (in Chap. XVI. below).

<sup>2</sup> See the *Preface to F.*, addressed to " Socrates " (*Frac.* I. 19, 20).

<sup>3</sup> *P. et l'Hum.* I. 30,

when Greek was already being taught by a few men of learning from the East, that a band of individual teachers arose, nurtured in the principles of the Founder of Humanism, who strove to give effect to his ideal in the education of youth. Such men as Guarino of Verona and Vittorino da Feltre, whose tastes had been formed by his writings, were animated by a simple love of learning and avoided the worst faults of the later Italian humanists. They were laymen, and their aim was to instil into the minds of the young nobility a broad, humane culture, founded on the study of the classics. The laity were the centre of the movement; yet its earlier stages were marked, as with Petrarch, by no revolt from Christian principles. Petrarch himself was only technically "a clerk"; as Gebhart remarks,<sup>1</sup> he was "canon of the same diocese" as the Platonist Ficino in the next century—the diocese of letters rather than of cloistral devotion. Nevertheless it is strange that one who lived so long at the Papal Court, and was four times offered the post of Apostolic Secretary, should have inaugurated a reform which was to destroy the educational monopoly of the clergy. Perhaps suspicion was lulled to sleep because he was a "mere student," and not an active propagator of his new ideas. It is not till the end of the century that we find a Dominican complaining of the tendency of profane culture to withdraw people from the Spirit's teaching, and asserting that the knowledge of Greek predisposed them to unbelief.<sup>2</sup>

Petrarch was himself constitutionally unfitted to be an actual teacher. He had the gift of inspiring others; but he was too self-absorbed—perhaps his methods were too desultory—for such practical work. The details and the system were evolved by his successors; and they have not always followed the lines which we may imagine he would have preferred. His scholarship was not of the philological type; it was the thought and the form of expression rather than the grammar of the Roman writers that he especially studied. Every one knows Macaulay's definition of a "scholar" as "a man who can read Plato with his feet on the fender"<sup>3</sup>; and we may be sure that, with the substitution of Virgil or Cicero for Plato, Petrarch would have cordially accepted it. He would have rejoiced, too, if he could have fore-

<sup>1</sup> Gebhart, p. 323.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 141. The friar was Giovanni Dominici.

<sup>3</sup> Trevelyan's *Life and Letters of Macaulay* (Popular Edition), p. 60.

seen that for centuries the ancient writers were to become "the staple" of higher education, not only in Italy, but in those northern countries which he considered half-barbarous.

Have we arrived to-day at a new turning-point in the history of education, when the ideals of Italian Humanism have become outworn, and when the classics will have to yield their pride of place to the clamorous claims of modern studies? It is a large question, which can only be cursorily considered here. It may be conceded that we have not the same paramount reasons which mediæval Italy had for restoring from oblivion her own glorious past and reviving a noble language and literature which had been grossly corrupted or misunderstood. The debased Latin of that day was in a sense a living language; often it was the only means of communication between men of different nationalities. The Latin of scholarship, which has long superseded it, merely simulates life; it is only by periphrases and other ingenious devices that it can be made to express the ideas of a far more complex age. Yet even in these days we are not far removed from the time when the more serious contributions to knowledge had to be written in Latin in order to secure an audience among the learned of other countries. It has been truly said that Petrarch was the real founder of that commonwealth of Polite Letters, which created a new bond between the nations of the West. "Once allied by a kindred theology, they were now bound together by philosophy and literature. In a Europe still subject to ecclesiastical and feudal authority, he founded a new power, outside Church and outside State—altogether moral, altogether modern—the Republic of Letters."<sup>1</sup> And if it be objected that Latin is no longer used, unless in "set orations" at the older Universities, as a means of conveying new and noble ideas, it may yet be forcibly urged in reply that "ancient classical Literature is, with the exception of the Bible, and a very few mediæval writings, the only common possession of all civilized peoples. . . . It is the one ground on which they all meet; it is therefore a living tie between the great modern nations."<sup>2</sup>

This argument, it is to be feared, will have little weight with

<sup>1</sup> G. Carducci, "Discourse at the tomb of F. P. at Arqua," July 18, 1874 (Tom. i. of his *Opere*, p. 251, quoted in *P. et l'Hum.* I. 30).

<sup>2</sup> Viscount Bryce's *Presidential Address to the Classical Association*, January 8, 1917, in the *Fortnightly Review* (April, 1917), No. DIV. p. 562.



those who maintain that the field of knowledge is now too vast for time to be "wasted" on "obsolete" subjects, and that the need for specializing is destined to be supreme for those who intend to follow professional or commercial careers. No doubt mediæval students in Theology or in the various branches of Law were ready, with far less reason, to take the same line against the advocates of the "new humanities." This utilitarian standpoint, however, mistaken we may think it, is more likely to prevail in an age of high material civilization, when all classes are clamouring for equal opportunities of culture. We may leave aside the super-eminence of the best classics simply as literature; for those who can never taste them at first hand are too likely to be blind to it. It is equally useless to prate to our "new educationists" about the influence of the classics in disciplining the mind and training the intelligence. What they want is a training that will be quickly profitable in a financial sense; and they hold that the study of the classics takes up too much time. We must frankly admit that multitudes who desire a good education have neither the time nor the capacity for learning the dead languages. But they cannot dispense, unless at great personal and national loss, with the study of history; and Lord Bryce has recently urged with great force that "ancient history is the key to all history, not to political history only, but to the changing thoughts and beliefs of races and peoples."<sup>1</sup>

It was the weakness of mediæval education that the study of history had become almost extinct. Men of high intellectual force had no idea how the world came to be as they found it; hence arose the marvellously embroidered tales and romances which the simple accepted as "gospel truth" because they were wholly destitute of the historic sense. In default of it, laymen employed themselves in practical pursuits; while theologians took refuge in abstract speculation, marvellous for the intellectual acuteness displayed, but shedding little or no light on the mysteries of nature and of man. It was part of Petrarch's task to restore this lost historic sense; and though his own writings on the subject would have answered his purpose far better, if they had been written in Italian than in Latin, they succeeded in

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* In the succeeding paragraphs he eloquently amplifies this truth.

dispelling—for those who could read them—much ignorance about the history and institutions of Rome.

There is surely much danger in our own day in the prevalence of crude, subversive theories, to which a sound knowledge of history, both ancient and modern, supplies the only safe antidote. Even our manual workers can learn, if their interest is once aroused, that there is “no short cut to cure the ills of civilization,” and that the breach of the economic laws upon which the fabric of society is built can only result in widespread misery. The crudest thinkers of revolutionary France (as of Russia to-day) were not only anti-religious and anti-classical, but anti-historic<sup>1</sup>; they wanted to live by the light of nature, and not by the teaching of the past; and the lessons of their failure have not been lost upon the more sober citizens of the Third Republic. With a wider outlook upon the past, there will come, we may hope, a desire and a demand for the wider culture first won for mankind by the early scholars of Italy. Five centuries ago, even when torn asunder by internal divisions, our third ally in the recent war laid upon the world a great debt which can never be repaid. “To mediæval Italy,” says Bishop Creighton,<sup>2</sup> “must all who honour culture turn with unfailing reverence; for she has ever been the home of great interpreters who have revealed man to himself, and have taught him in ever changing forms to see and know what is the heritage that the past has handed on.”

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Foster Watson on “The Classics and Democracy” in *The Nineteenth Century and After*, No. 507 (May, 1919). His attempt to prove that in the past democracy has proved favourable, and anti-democracy antipathetic to the classics has a savour of paradox; but it is certainly curious to see how the best minds in America have (till recently) perceived and enforced their value.

<sup>2</sup> *Historical Essays and Reviews* (1902), pp. 108, 109.

## CHAPTER XIII

### FIRST SOJOURN AT VAUCLUSE (1337-1340)

THE precise circumstances attending Petrarch's retirement to Vacluse in 1337 are obscure. A day or two after his travels had ended (August 16), he writes to his early friend<sup>1</sup> that "hard necessity" had compelled him to return; and if he had found it difficult to gain the Cardinal's consent to his journey to Rome,<sup>2</sup> we might suppose it would have been harder still to get permission for a separation of indefinite length. But we are not to suppose that his familiar relations with his patron were now completely severed; for in his eighth Eclogue,<sup>3</sup> written ten years later, he speaks of having rendered "four lustres" (nearly twenty years) of service. It must have been an easy yoke, and his patron one of the most generous of masters, as he often admits; but though he was in less constant attendance, there was doubtless still a tie, which bound him to return to the Colonna Palace when his services were required. Perhaps he was able to depute a friend to discharge his more formal duties, as may have been the case during his travels. Still, if his help was valued and if he continued to receive a salary, there must have been strong reasons to induce the Cardinal to part with one, whose conversation must have been so attractive to his frequent guests, and whose skill as a Latin secretary it must have been hard to replace. We may assume that these reasons were personal to Petrarch himself; and it does not follow that he confided all of them to his patron.

Undoubtedly the most potent was that which he confesses

<sup>1</sup> *F.* III. 2 (to Tommaso of Messina). See Vol. I. p. 364.

<sup>2</sup> *F.* IV. 12 (*Frac.* I. 226).

<sup>3</sup> *Ecl.* VIII. ll. 88, 89. It is of course a "round number," and we cannot conclude from this (as Lo Parco does, see Vol. I. p. 170, n.) that his "service" began in 1327.



in his *Secret*<sup>1</sup> and in his metrical letter<sup>2</sup> to his friend the Bishop, but which he could reveal to few besides. Avignon was the place where he had first met "Laura," and it was still her residence. Here for ten years he had roamed the streets, weaving fresh sonnets in her praise, half hoping, half dreading that the turning of a corner would result in an unexpected meeting. He had come in time to recognize the folly of these dreams and the injury they were inflicting upon his better nature; and he had thrice tried an absence of several months and had found himself invigorated, morally and mentally, by the change. But on his return he had slipped back into old ways and lost all the ground that he had gained. The old sickness had recurred, but now he was far more vexed and ashamed at the relapse.

"How often," he makes St. Augustine say, "in this very city, which has been—I will not say the cause, but—the scene of all your ills, after you had seemed cured—and were so in part, if your flight had continued—how often, I say, in pacing the well-known streets, warned by the mere familiarity of your old vanities, without any actual encounter, you have stopped, stupefied, sighing, hardly able to restrain your tears, and turned to flee, as if actually wounded, saying to yourself—'These places are beset with the snares of my old foe; the very ashes of death are here'." <sup>3</sup>

This was no poetic exaggeration; it was an actual well remembered fact, which we shall presently record.<sup>4</sup> Such emotions might well be described pathologically as a disease<sup>5</sup>; but we must not forget that the poet's conscience, though often lulled to sleep, had been awakened by confession; and the conflict was nowhere so sharp as in the place where his fancy had gone astray.

But in the *Letter to Posterity*, written some years after his love-wound had been healed by Laura's death, he still lays the blame upon Avignon, though for a different reason. He calls it "the most wearisome of cities,"<sup>6</sup> and says that on returning

<sup>1</sup> *Dial.* III. pp. 404, 406 (B. ed.).

<sup>2</sup> *Ep. Metr.* I. vii. See Vol. I. pp. 365-368.

<sup>3</sup> The *Secret* (B. ed. p. 406). The word rendered "scene" is "*officina*"—literally "factory."

<sup>4</sup> See below, pp. 81, 82.

<sup>5</sup> It is the very term employed by P. himself in the remarkable poem just mentioned (see l. 105).

<sup>6</sup> "*Tædiosissimæ urbis*" (Frac. I. 7).

thither, he looked for "a retreat,"<sup>1</sup> free from all its noise and bustle. It was a natural desire; and the Cardinal, to whom the pretext was doubtless advanced, had the good sense not to oppose it. The poet must have found his seven years' service at the Colonna Palace, however light its duties, decidedly hostile to study. Although the greater part of his future life was still to be passed in cities, there was a vein in his nature, as in Wordsworth's, which delighted in wild scenery and felt it to be a perpetual inspiration.<sup>2</sup> But for a man in Petrarch's position—with an assured, though humble, place in the fashionable circles of the Papal city—such conduct would be thought extraordinary.<sup>3</sup> He was deliberately retiring from a society, which had begun to appreciate his lyrical gift, and was preferring the company of boors and wild beasts. If he had joined some monastery, the world, with far less surprise, might have shaken a regretful head, and then proceeded to forget him. But this step was so entirely novel as to set people talking; perhaps it actually contributed to enhance his growing renown. His retreat was so near that it did not amount to exile; and it might set at rest speculations, which he would be anxious to stifle, as to the identity of "Laura." His treatise on "the Solitary Life," composed nine years later (1346), but left long unpublished, may be regarded as his reasoned "Apologia" on the subject. Nor can we doubt that, after eight months' wandering at his own sweet will, he was in no mood to resume his old fetters. Moreover, his visit to Rome had naturally increased what he calls his "ingrained repugnance" to Avignon, as the usurper of the rights of the Eternal City; and the rising towers of the Papal Palace were a daily torment to his sensitive soul. Above all, he pined for liberty and leisure; and if he had not obtained this opportunity for study and research, his supreme vocation, as the restorer of ancient letters, might have remained undischarged.

There may also have been two private reasons, which influenced his decision—the first affecting himself, and the second

<sup>1</sup> "Diverticulum" (*ibid.*)—a word which is far from classical, if not coined for the occasion.

<sup>2</sup> See the admirable essay on P.'s feeling for nature by B. Zumbini in his *Studi sul P.* (Florence, 1895), pp. 1-66.

<sup>3</sup> As it was (*e.g.*) by Stefano Colonna the younger. See *F.* III. 5, translated below, pp. 68, 69.

his brother Gherardo. The former concerned a frailty, of which he never speaks in direct terms,<sup>1</sup> but which has left a deep stain upon a life otherwise outwardly blameless. In the previous year he had had a liaison with a woman of Avignon, who about the middle of 1337<sup>2</sup> bore him a son, afterwards named Giovanni. Of this woman we know nothing, except that she was unmarried.<sup>3</sup> It is quite likely that she was of low origin; but the suggestion<sup>4</sup> that she was a common prostitute merely adds gratuitous insult to well-merited censure. At any rate Petrarch, though so sensitive to the world's opinion, always acknowledged the paternity, as he did that of his daughter Francesca, who was born six years later (1343), probably of the same mother. It is some testimony to the latter that he left both children to her care in their early years, and that Francesca (who would be most open to the mother's influence and of whom we hear nothing till her marriage at eighteen) lived to be the solace of her father's declining years. There is a curious allusion in a letter of 1351,<sup>5</sup> referring almost undoubtedly to the same woman, which (in my view) had been misunderstood by his biographers. On his return to Avignon in that year, his mistress disturbed his peace by some supposed claim upon him, which has been interpreted as merely a desire to resume their illicit relations. Certainly the passage may have this meaning; but there is a phrase which suggests another—less injurious to her character, if not to his. Petrarch implies that he then solemnly swore to her that he had resolved to live *unmarried*,<sup>6</sup> and that she, well knowing his fiery tempera-

<sup>1</sup> In the *Secret* he makes no distinct allusion to it, and he never explicitly calls Giovanni his son, though the fact was notorious.

<sup>2</sup> P. states (in his Virgil Note) that his son, at his death (July 10, 1361) was in his 25th year. M. de Nolhac (*P. et l'Hum.* ii. 284, n. 6) notes that there is no doubt about the figure (in Roman numerals). But in *Sen.* I. 3, P. writes to Nelli that Giovanni had not completed his 24th year, and adds that when the boy was born, he (P.) had known Socrates "seven full years." If the birth took place in June or July, these statements would be consistent, and the Virgil Note, written when the news was fresh, approximately correct.

<sup>3</sup> This we know from Clement VI.'s Brief legitimizing Giovanni, where she is called "soluta." De Sade III. (*Pièces Justres*, No. xviii. p. 50).

<sup>4</sup> Koerting (*op. cit.*), p. 144. As I have shown, he is in error in supposing P. to be a priest.

<sup>5</sup> *F.* IX. 3 (*Frac.* II. p. 7).

<sup>6</sup> I take "cælebs" in this passage as meaning "single" and referring to legal marriage. This was its ancient meaning, but I cannot say whether mediæval Latin extends this sense to freedom from illicit connexions,



ment, refused to credit his oath. There need be no question of a former promise of marriage; but he may have assured her, at the commencement of their intimacy, that if he ever married, she should be his wife. If he ever had any hope of being united to "Laura," the promise would have been a false one; but I hold strongly that he always knew well the hopelessness of his early passion. In the height of his youthful temptations he may have thought that he could conquer his early aversion to marriage; but on the contrary it only became stronger, as he learnt to control his desires. In the *Letter to Posterity*, without explicitly confessing this early fault, he freely avows that before his fortieth year he had not led a pure life; and though in two other letters<sup>1</sup> he dates his reformation from the year of the Jubilee (1350), he may only mean that he reckoned his final victory from the latter date. If the city of Avignon were the "sink of iniquity" that he describes,<sup>2</sup> his lapse may have been leniently judged, even in ecclesiastical circles; possibly, in the laxity of public opinion, it would not have cost him the favour of the Cardinal, who was personally a man of strict morals.<sup>3</sup> But the sad fact might be difficult to conceal, even from the chaste ears of "Laura"; and a feeling of self-respect, in which he was never deficient, may have increased his anxiety to withdraw from the scene of his temptation and his fall.

If M. Henry Cochin is right, Petrarch had good reason to be as much concerned for his brother Gherardo as for himself. We have seen grounds for dating the death of Gherardo's lady-love in 1336 or 1337<sup>4</sup>; and it is fair to conclude that Francesco, in alluding to this loss, although he uses the plural, is thinking of his brother's case rather than his own. He says that Gherardo was so stunned by the calamity as to utter blasphemous complaints against the Hand which had sent it.<sup>5</sup> If on his return from his travels he found his brother in this distressful state, what could be more natural than that he should take him away

<sup>1</sup> *F.* XI. 1 (to Boccaccio), where the reference to sins is general, and *Sen.* VIII. 8 (to the same), where he is speaking specially of sins of the flesh.

<sup>2</sup> In the *Secret* (Dial II.) and in *S. T.* (*passim*).

<sup>3</sup> See the letters to Lælius, *F.* III. 21 and 22.

<sup>4</sup> See Vol. I. p. 317.

<sup>5</sup> *F.* X. 3 (Frac. II. 72), to Gherardo from Carpi in September, 1349. He is evidently speaking of his brother, whom he calls "Dei hostis," though, in order to soften the reference, he uses the first person plural.

for a time into the country from the scene of his bitter woe? There is evidence, which has escaped many of his biographers, that the brothers retired to Vacluse together.<sup>1</sup> But I cannot agree with M. Cochin that this was a permanent arrangement, and that Gherardo lived with the poet in his retreat until his entrance into the Carthusian order six years later. The letter of 1338, which he adduces as evidence, seems to me to prove the contrary.<sup>2</sup> In his metrical letter<sup>3</sup> of the same year to Giacomo Colonna (quoted below) Petrarch says not merely that he was alone, but that that was his usual condition. It is quite possible that he wished his cottage to be Gherardo's headquarters, to which he could return whenever he pleased. But Gherardo, who was thirty years of age, must have had some means of livelihood, which obliged him to be constantly in Avignon; he was not the man to live in idleness under his brother's roof. Even if he loved the country, he did not possess Francesco's intellectual resources; a permanent home at Vacluse, without some settled occupation, would only have led him to mope and brood. We do not know the nature of his work at Avignon; but Francesco had good friends there, as Socrates and Gui Sette, who would look after him in the city.

It is indeed a puzzle how Francesco himself managed to afford the expense of a new establishment and of a life of literary leisure. Since his habits were very simple, his chief outlay would be upon a horse and a servant; and the Cardinal probably continued to make him an allowance. If we are to believe Boccaccio,<sup>4</sup> he did not rent the house in which he lived, but bought it outright when he settled at Vacluse; and the provision about it in his will proves that it was his property at his death.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> He says in *F. X.* 4 (to the same) that they chose Vacluse as their common residence ("nostram sedem delegimus," *Frac. II.* 85); and the context shows plainly that the first person plural is not used here for the first person singular. This seems to imply that Gherardo accompanied him at first; but it would be rash to conclude from it, as M. Cochin does (*Le Frère de P.*, p. 48), that Gherardo lived nowhere else until he became a monk.

<sup>2</sup> See n. 2, p. 83 (below).

<sup>3</sup> *Ep. Metr. I.* vii., ll. 162, 163 (below, p. 67).

<sup>4</sup> In the *De Montibus, Silvis, Fontibus*, etc. (p. 435 in the 1532 Basle ed. of the Latin works by Hervagius), "parvo ibi comparato domicilio et agello." See the translation of the passage in A. Hortis (*Op. Lat. del B.*, Trieste, 1879), p. 243. Since B. is said to have written this work towards the end of his life, it must have been after he became intimate with P.

<sup>5</sup> *Testamentum Petrarcae* (B. ed. p. 1375).

In a letter,<sup>1</sup> which probably belongs to the period of his first retirement, he confesses, in refusing a request for a loan, that he was about to apply to his petitioner for similar help. But he offers to send his correspondent articles to put in pawn, if they will be of any use to him. He thanks God that his lot was cast neither in riches nor in poverty, but in Horace's "golden mean" between them, and he admits that he should seldom be in straits for money, had not "a nobler charge" made him careless in household matters. This probably means that, like most literary men, he regarded anxiety about money as sordid; in the same letter he says, "Please God, I will never allow a mind inclined to greater things to become the slave of a metal."<sup>2</sup> He certainly adhered to this principle throughout his life, which abounds in instances of generosity towards his friends.

Some have supposed<sup>3</sup> that he inherited the Vacluse property from his father; and an imaginative writer<sup>4</sup> even professes to have seen the tombstone of his mother Eletta built into a wall of the presbytery. But the evidence is extremely slender<sup>5</sup>; and a passage in a letter of 1349, which has been cited as proof that he was often in the valley during the previous ten years (1327-1337), is more naturally taken as referring to his later sojourn.<sup>6</sup> Petrarco's turn of mind was too practical to be attracted to Vacluse except by business; and his son states that through the malversation of the executors he inherited nothing from his father but a valuable MS. of Cicero.<sup>7</sup> He

<sup>1</sup> F. III. 14 (to a person unknown).

<sup>2</sup> "Non sinam, si Deo placet, metallis servire animum ad maiora dispositum" (*ibid.*, Frac. I. 171).

<sup>3</sup> Notably L. Bandini, in his *Vita di F. P.*, prefixed to his edition of the *Rime* (Florence, 1748, pp. xviii. to liii.).

<sup>4</sup> H. d'Olivier Vitalis (*op. cit.*, Vol. I. p. 249), p. 277. I have already in that chapter expressed my opinion of this fanciful writer, who on visiting Vacluse at a later date found that the tombstone had vanished. The stone must have been of a wonderful texture to preserve this inscription in a still legible state after five hundred years.

<sup>5</sup> G. Bayle (*Le Véritable Emplacement de l'habitation de P. à Vacluse*, Nîmes, 1897, p. 4) mentions an old document found in 1613 at Cavaillon. It is a legal certificate of the transference of the relics of St. Vêran from Vacluse to Cavaillon on July 13, 1321, which is said to bear the name of "Petrarch" as witness! Allowing that this is a mistake for "Petracco," we need only infer that the latter was present in his professional capacity.

<sup>6</sup> F. VIII. 3 (Frac. I. 420). The passage need not refer to the years before 1337; P. often uses "juventus" and "adolescencia" loosely for his later years.

<sup>7</sup> *Sen.* XVI. 1 (Frac.) See Vol. I. p. 149.



may, of course, have paid occasional visits to the valley during his residence at Avignon,<sup>1</sup> and so have strengthened the resolve of his boyhood to make it the scene of his future studies.

Apart from Petrarch's connexion with it, which has attracted pilgrims to the spot for six centuries,<sup>2</sup> the fountain of Vaucluse, as a natural phenomenon, is almost unique in the whole world. Scarcely anywhere else <sup>3</sup> does a stream gushing from the bowels of the earth become a river, navigable, at least by a flat-bottomed boat, within a few hundred yards of its source. The valley itself, scarcely a mile in length from the spring till it opens out into the plain of L'Isle, must have been scooped out in myriads of years by the vast power of the issuing waters. De Sade not inaptly compares its shape to that of a horseshoe; but in reality it is more like two such shoes—an outer, which is large, and an inner, which is small, placed sideways with their points adjacent, and with a narrow passage between them. The village of Vaucluse is near the centre of the outer circle; and the water, as it emerges from the passage, has in recent times been captured for the benefit of several unsightly paper-mills, which occupy that side of the settlement. On a height above them, but on the southern side towards the source, stands a ruined castle, which in course of ages was fabled to have been the residence of the poet, though it was really that of the mediæval lord of the place, the Bishop of the neighbouring town of Cavaillon. It was built in the thirteenth century, and in Petrarch's day was still sometimes used by the Bishop; but he had another house at Cavaillon, and the existing remains indicate only a small building.

At present the aspect of the valley, though wild and romantic, is bare and almost forbidding. Within the passage and in the inner circle there is an undergrowth of shrubs, in some places watered by the spray of the torrent in spring; and a very few young saplings of fir find a precarious roothold on the rocky

<sup>1</sup> G. Bayle (p. 6) strangely thinks it unlikely he should stay at an inn.

<sup>2</sup> Among them the poets Alfieri (1783), and Wordsworth (1837), who was enchanted with its beauty; and in modern times Mr. Henry James, who, having a senseless prejudice against P. and "Laura," was most unwilling to go, but confesses he was amply repaid (*A little Tour in France*, pp. 289-296).

<sup>3</sup> Kraus (*op. cit.* p. 99), after asserting that there are similar valleys in Provence, mentions only that of St. Pont, but does not show that it has a similar river-source.

mountain walls. But in the fourteenth century, the valley, except in the immediate vicinity of the houses, was clothed with a rich forest of oaks—some of them, presumably those in the outer valley, of a considerable size. Such a setting is all that is needed to-day to soften the stern contour of the upper hills and to give to the landscape an air of idyllic peace.

The effect produced upon the casual visitor is enhanced by the suddenness with which this remarkable scene bursts upon his view. The journey from the station at L'Isle to Vacluse—a distance of about four miles—is over a smiling and fertile plain ; and it is only when the hill of Galas is reached on the left bank of the Sorgues, where a modern aqueduct conveying water to Carpentras crosses the river, that he finds himself within the mountain walls of “ the closed Valley.” In 1316, when the boy Francesco paid his first visit, this hill was still occupied by a Benedictine monastery, founded in the eleventh century. But two years later the monks migrated to Cavaillon ; and the site remained desolate for a long period (covering the poet's residence) till the buildings were bought and turned into a villa by Cardinal de Foix.<sup>1</sup> From this point two modern roads, one on each side of the stream, approach the village through the lower valley, till in about a kilometre the western rim of the outer horseshoe is reached. Here the Sorgues makes a sharp turn to the south (where a narrow transverse valley opens out from the hills), but it bends back north and again south at the eastern limit of the village and its basin ; and it is here that the poet's cottage is believed by the best authorities to have stood, close to the left bank.<sup>2</sup> The village is in the angle of the two loops ; and the first, which has the ancient church and most of the houses on the right bank, is connected with the second by a bridge which even if not ancient, must occupy the spot where the stream was always crossed. A few yards from the eastern end of the bridge is a short “ tunnel ”<sup>3</sup> under the steep hillside, at the further (eastern) end of which stands the substantial modern house of the Tacussel family, situated near to the exact site of the poet's

<sup>1</sup> J. Courtet, *Vaocluse et Pétrarque* (*Revue Archéologique de Paris*, t. vi. pt. ii. 1850, pp. 787-796).

<sup>2</sup> See Excursus V. at the end of this Book on the various theories as to the site of the cottage. P.'s own words (in *F.* VI. 3 and XIII. 8) really leave no doubt.

<sup>3</sup> To this very ancient “ tunnel ” I shall return presently,

cottage. This is separated from its garden, which is practically an island, by a narrow canalized channel drawn from the main stream above. Thus, if Petrarch wished to go by the main footpath on the right bank to the source—the only practicable route to-day—he must traverse the tunnel and the bridge in order to reach it.

From the western end of the bridge the traveller follows a narrow pathway above the stream (on his right), till in about a quarter of a mile he finds himself in a small basin or “ cirque ” (the inner horseshoe), surrounded by lofty hills. The crags on each side of the valley are seamed by natural terraces, which in the more open parts near the village are planted with olives, but near the source are too rough and precipitous for cultivation. Here the visitor is confronted by a gigantic wall of rock, which rises nearly perpendicular and in places even overhanging to a height of more than 350 feet,<sup>1</sup> and is crowned by receding slopes above it which reach a height (above the sea) more than six times as great. The magnificent scene, which is then presented by the river, varies according to the season. When I visited it in mid-April, the circular pool under the rock-wall was full to its brim with a seething whirlpool of water, which descended beside the footpath in a series of fine cascades for more than 200 yards to a calmer stretch of water below, whence, still running at a great pace, it curved west and south and then west again, before passing under the village bridge. This spectacle is to be seen in all its majesty for three weeks (or less) during the year—in March or April and in October or November. The famous fountain of Vaucluse is at these periods invisible; and one is disposed to wonder whence comes the vast mass of water poured without ceasing from the mountain-side. It has been computed that at the spring and autumn “ spates ” the volume of water discharged is nearly 9,000 gallons *per second*.<sup>2</sup> If we suppose that the outflow comes from a subterranean reservoir of the usual

<sup>1</sup> Its height (above the pool) is stated to be 115 metres and, above the sea, 225 (about 737 feet); but the highest peak behind it reaches 684 metres. This precipice is that which P. calls “ il gran sasso ” (Canz. XIV. and Ss. 81, and 37, Part II).

<sup>2</sup> These details are given in the small work, *P. at Vaucluse*, 1337-1353, (in English) by the Swedish professor Fredrik Wulff (Lund. 1904, p. 7). He gives the statistics in French measures, which I have changed to English.



depth, it is calculated that this sheet of water must cover an area of *over thirteen square miles*.<sup>1</sup>

But in the drier seasons between these periodic discharges a very different spectacle presents itself. The fall of the water<sup>r</sup> discloses a great gap at the bottom of the rock-face—a huge grotto about thirty yards long by twenty broad, the entrance of which is sixty-five feet high. Within this grotto on its eastern side is seen, when the eye becomes used to its dim mysterious light, a small oval basin of water which is the real fount. It was locally asserted in de Sade's time that this could not be sounded—in his view<sup>2</sup> because the lead was borne up by the gush of water; it is now ascertained to be nearly seventy feet deep, and it presumably communicates with the reservoir mentioned above. In this more normal state of affairs the pool outside the grotto sinks below the level of the top of the cascade, so that the river, as Zumbini says,<sup>3</sup> seems decapitated; yet the supply of water to the cascade continues through underground channels connected with the reservoir, and its discharge is never less than 1,200 gallons a second, the usual outflow being about 1,750. In these dry periods the outer pool sinks to a pond about six feet across; and it is easy to pick your way among heavy moss-grown boulders—the relics of some ancient fall from the cliffs—to the opposite bank, which during the spate is inaccessible. It was here, amid the talus fringing the left bank, that the poet constructed the upper of his two gardens, sacred to Apollo<sup>4</sup> (the deity of poetry), to which we shall presently recur. He speaks of it as “shady,” thus indicating that trees then grew much more plentifully around the outer pool than is the case now. One tree, indeed, there is—a fig-tree clinging by its roots to the steep cliff above the grotto—which is mentioned in records 250 years old,<sup>5</sup> and which still braves the storms in its lofty position, though the soil feeding it must be of the scantiest.

Grand and imposing as is this upper basin hemmed in by its lofty crags, it would be lacking in softness, but for one remarkable feature. This is the colour of the water, which, though

<sup>1</sup> Wulff (*op. cit.*), p. 4. The geological computation is 3,350 hectares.

<sup>2</sup> T. I., p. 342.

<sup>3</sup> Zumbini (*op. cit.* n. 2, p. 53), p. 269.

<sup>4</sup> See F. XIII. 8 (to Nelli) where he describes his two gardens in 1352.

<sup>5</sup> L'abbé Arnavon, *P. à Vaucluse* (Paris, 1804), p. 204. I am speaking of 1898; it may have disappeared since that date.

rather turbid during its rise, becomes a most exquisite green in the stiller months of the summer. This is, of course, especially noticeable in the outer pool and in the stretch of calm water below the cascade. Petrarch speaks of the Sorgues as "concealing green emeralds beneath its glassy surface."<sup>1</sup> It has been compared<sup>2</sup> to a green plant steeped in water, and its hue to that of the streams which descend from the uplands of Greece to mingle with the Ionian Sea. The colour is said to be due to an aquatic plant, which grows freely in its bed, and of which—according to Pliny, who knew of the fountain, at least by report<sup>3</sup>—the cattle are so fond that they will plunge their whole heads in the water in order to browse upon it. The stillness enfolding this wild spot in the height of summer enhances the mystery, which even for men of science—in spite of their confident statistics—clings to the marvel of the subterranean source. It has been well said<sup>4</sup> that they have only succeeded in "placing a huge mark of interrogation on the precipice, which guards the valley, like a Sphinx uncarved."

But if the spectator enters the silent grotto—especially at night, when the full moon sheds its rays within the arch, as Petrarch used to do—his sense of mystery will be deepened; he will experience an eerie feeling akin to religious awe. We know that the poet was no stranger to this feeling. He quotes<sup>5</sup> with approval a passage from Seneca,<sup>6</sup> in which the Stoic philosopher confesses to it.

"Any cave, hollowed deep out of the rocks of an overhanging mountain not by human hand but by natural causes, will impress your mind with an idea of religion. We venerate the sources of great rivers; every sudden bursting of a vast stream from a hidden source has its altar."

Petrarch quotes the passage to sustain his claim that no river has a more extraordinary source than the Sorgues, and therefore that none more richly deserves its altar. He says that he has

<sup>1</sup> *Ep. Metr.* III. i. l. 7 (to Cardinal Colonna).

<sup>2</sup> Mézières, *Petrarque*, p. 80.

<sup>3</sup> *Nat. Hist.* XVIII. cap. 62.

<sup>4</sup> J. Saint Martin, *La Fontaine de Vaucluse* (Paris, 1895), p. 240, as quoted by Zumbini (*op. cit.*), p. 272.

<sup>5</sup> *Vit. Sol.* II. x. 2 (B. ed. p. 325).

<sup>6</sup> Moral Epistles (*Opera*, ed. Haase, Leipsic, 1895, Vol. III.) to Lucilius IV. 12 (41), § 3.





Tercio Gracior & laniū dū oerit fūmū  
 tū quid teci necat nisi tū ad p̄xiō āno  
 qui eu enere maxmā h̄m̄ lōa p̄cem  
 deū in tois optat̄ idē qua p̄noce  
 dū r̄lūm̄ h̄m̄ eul in d̄ntūen



¶ Transalpina solitudo mea iocundissima.

# THE FOUNTAIN OF VAUCLUSE.

A sketch by Petrarch's own hand, taken from his manuscript of *Pliny et Paris*.  
 The last line is in his own handwriting.

long intended to raise a shrine near the source, not to the Nymphs or river deities whom Seneca has in mind, but to the Virgin Mary, whose Offspring prevailed to overthrow their temples. The plan was never executed; but my belief is that in his own sketch of the fount in his Pliny, which is here reproduced,<sup>1</sup> he has represented the chapel not as already existing, but as he would have wished it to have been. He has depicted it as overhanging the fount to the left (east)—probably an impossible position in fact, but otherwise he could not have introduced it without blocking out the view of the grotto.

It has been conjectured by modern antiquaries<sup>2</sup> that the Romans erected a temple to the Fount at Vacluse, and indeed that the two columns supporting the apsidal arch in the church of Saint Véran, which are partly buried in the soil, were the pillars that flanked the "cella," or shrine, standing on the same spot. The conjecture—if he could have formed it—would have been vastly interesting to our poet and would certainly have inspired his Muse. The main structure of the church of Saint Véran, though the front is modern, dates from the tenth century; and the internal view of its walls and apse is much the same to-day as when Petrarch worshipped there. He devotes the rest of the above-cited chapter of his work on Solitude to the honour of Saint Véran, who, according to popular legend, first evangelized the wild valley. He was a hermit of the sixth century, who came from the Orleans district and built his cell at Vacluse, after vanquishing a terrible dragon which lurked in one of its caves. His pre-eminent sanctity caused his promotion to the bishopric of Cavaillon, much against his own will; but at his death he was buried by his own desire in the village church which he had founded. In the left transept is a low chapel containing his tomb; but his relics were transferred to Cavaillon, when Petrarch was a lad.<sup>3</sup> The poet relates, presumably from tradition, that the tunnel adjacent to his cottage was pierced by the labour of

<sup>1</sup> Reproduced from de Nolhac's *P. de l'Humanisme* (1907), t. ii. (facing p. 268). He states (p. 270) that the chapel is that of St. Victor, which has long disappeared. But surely that building was in the higher part of the village of Vacluse; it would therefore have been at the sketcher's back, if not out of sight.

<sup>2</sup> See J. Courtet's archæological essay, quoted above.

<sup>3</sup> See n. 5, p. 57, in this chapter. These details are taken from Courtet (*op. cit.*).

the saint himself<sup>1</sup>; but modern authorities refer it to the Romans, who constructed it in order to ease off the flood from the land in the river-bend, on which their settlement also stood. The precaution proved unnecessary, as the stream could not be induced to take this artificial course.

Petrarch's rural retreat was thus more ancient than he supposed, and contained a fair number of inhabitants. Perhaps M. Bayle infers too much from later documents as to its importance in the fourteenth century.<sup>2</sup> The lords of the manor no doubt had village officers, who were charged with its defence against marauders; but with the exception of those in their employ the villagers were mostly peasants, who lived by the cultivation of the soil. No reasonable doubt can exist that Petrarch's house was just outside the eastern exit of the tunnel and only a few feet above the level of the Sorgues. Here there was a kind of recess in the rock against which the back part of the cottage rested. It was a very humble abode, consisting probably of only three or four rooms; and it was divided from the house of his bailiff or general servant, Raymond Monet, merely by a door. The character of this excellent man, who served him most faithfully for fifteen years,<sup>3</sup> and of his patient, industrious wife, have been drawn by Petrarch with a master hand.<sup>4</sup>

In the first years of his seclusion he seems to have had no constant companion but a large white dog of Spanish breed, which the Cardinal gave him on one of his rare visits to the Colonna Palace. He has described the habits of this animal in one of the most charming of his letters in Latin verse.<sup>5</sup> He mentions the

<sup>1</sup> *Vit. Sol.* II. x. (as above).

<sup>2</sup> G. Bayle (*op. cit.*), p. 5. He gives no proof that in 1337 there were any inhabitants of P.'s own social position, except the Bishop, who was a rare visitant. I am much indebted to this excellent pamphlet for the details in Excursus V.

<sup>3</sup> I cannot imagine why M. Cochin should assert (*Le Frère de P.*, p. 46, n. 2) that Monet only became P.'s servant in 1339. In the letter of January 5, 1352 (*F.* XVI. 1. to Card. Talleyrand) announcing Monet's death, P. expressly states that he had served him fifteen years (*tribus jam lustris*). The "jam" shows that the fifteen years were almost, if not quite, complete.

<sup>4</sup> See below, Chap. XIX. pp. 381-383.

<sup>5</sup> *Ep. Metr.* III. v. (to Cardinal Colonna). Signora Magrini well remarks (*op. cit.* p. 132) that the letter illustrates P.'s mastery of Latin in the familiar style. She is plainly wrong, however, in dating the letter (from its position) in 1347. Rossetti rightly considers it one of the earliest, as is proved by the allusion to the dog in *Ep. Metr.* I. vii. (l. 163 below) which belongs to 1338. I can imagine no better exercise for a schoolboy



dog's sullen submission when compelled to accompany him,<sup>1</sup> and his rapid accommodation to his new home. His mange disappears, and he goes about with a prouder air, hugging his collar adorned with the Cardinal's device of white columns. The shepherds fear him, and the crowd at the poet's door incontinently vanishes. He lies on the doorstep at night and at sunrise whines and scratches for Petrarch to get up. Then at his egress he barks with delight, precedes him to his haunts, and when he sits down and pulls out his papers, he lies with his back to him to guard his privacy. When he goes up the path to the fountain, the dog plants himself in the narrow track to keep off intruders; but he will come at Petrarch's lightest call and welcomes his friends in gentlest fashion. The rustics, who had been wont to bother the poet with family troubles or with knotty points of law, now keep away to his great relief. He asserts that the dog's bark sometimes takes a higher key in imitation of shouting boys. He will dart into the stream to seize a goose and then present it to a passer-by; and his "catches" grace the scanty board of the poor. He will not touch a hare and is gentle to all small things, leaving kids and sheep alone; yet he sometimes hangs on to the ear of a sow or a heifer. The poet compares these lofty tastes to those of the dog of Alexander the Great, whose master destroyed him when he found that he despised deer, bears and boars, but afterwards regretted it when he procured another, which was ready to tackle lions and elephants. So this dog, as Petrarch remembers, wanted to "go for" a caged lion at the Papal Palace and was depressed at being dragged away. He easily recognizes the Cardinal's messengers, and recollecting his former high estate, would no doubt prefer to return to it.

Although, by his own confession,<sup>2</sup> Petrarch's rustic exile failed to heal the love-wound that he had received from "Laura," yet these first months of seclusion plainly gave to his mind a healthier tone. If he had not been so near to her, and if he would have abstained from musing on her perfections in those sonnets and odes which his town-friends so greatly admired, his cure might have become complete. For he was now master of his employing his prentice-hand in verse-making than to turn this letter from English into Latin.

<sup>1</sup> He did not take the dog with him on his first departure from Avignon, as l. 30 sufficiently proves.

<sup>2</sup> The *Secret* (Dial. III.) and *F.* VIII. 3 to Olympius (Frac. I. 420).

own time, and there is evidence that he employed it not in mere sonneteering, but in drinking deep of the fountain of ancient literature. We may confidently ascribe to this first solitary winter the design, and indeed the commencement,<sup>1</sup> of his most ambitious historical work, the *De Viris Illustribus*. This was a series of lives of Roman warriors and statesmen from Romulus to Titus, which was to be a sort of compendium<sup>2</sup> of Roman history. Afterwards—at what date is not clear<sup>3</sup>—he extended his design so as to include famous men of all ages and countries. Even the first more restricted plan was enough to absorb the energies of a lifetime. But Petrarch, like many lesser men, was in the habit of forming grand literary projects, which he subsequently shelved or postponed, as soon as he discovered the difficulty of executing them.<sup>4</sup> So far he had written nothing but a few fugitive love poems in Italian—which at heart he despised—and some Latin letters, copies of which he kept in his cupboards as a nucleus for a future collection. If he had not possessed great intellectual energy, he would have found his new freedom in such ideal surroundings more enervating than bracing, and would gradually have sunk into a mere dilettante.

In order to prove the extent of his reading at this time I need only quote the remainder of his verse-letter to the Bishop of Lombez,<sup>5</sup> which he wrote in the summer of the following year (1338). The version, however rude, may perhaps express, as no mere citation would do, the exact state of his mind at the time, which was what the Bishop desired to know.

... "Such is my story, but you ask for more;  
Take then this tale succinct of all my days.

<sup>1</sup> The proof of the priority of the *De Viris* over the *Africa* is contained in the *Secret* (Dial. III. B. ed., p. 411), where he speaks (through Augustine) of beginning the *Africa* before the other was completed, which in fact it never was.

<sup>2</sup> Curiously enough he gives the term "Compendium" to the epitome of his longer work, subsequently written at Padua; while in the MSS. the term "Epitome" is given to the main work. This strange circumstance has produced much confusion. See de Nolhac's *Le 'De Viris Illustribus' de P.* (Paris, 1890), pp. 10, 11.

<sup>3</sup> He alludes to the longer design in *F.* VIII. 3, which was written in 1349; and since the *Secret* was written in 1342-1343 the change must have been between these dates. For a discussion of the whole question see below, Chap. XLIII.

<sup>4</sup> *Ep. Post.* See p. 422, below.

<sup>5</sup> *Ep. Metr.* I. vii. ll. 156-237. The earlier lines are translated above, Vol. I. pp. 365-368.

160. My supper is light ; its condiments are hunger  
 And toil and fast sustained through the long day.  
 My bailiff waits ; my company's myself  
 And a faithful hound ; this place has scared all else,  
 From which vain Pleasure, armed with Cupid's darts,  
 Is banished—gone to rich and crowded towns.  
 Here dwell with me the Muses, long exiled,  
 In haunt retired ; guests seldom come, unless  
 Lured by the marvels of this fount renowned.  
 My stay, though near a year, but once or twice
170. Has gathered in Vaucluse my friends, much missed.  
 Thus distance rules affection ; but a letter  
 Not seldom comes ; they talk to me at night  
 Lonely by firelight, or in day's cool shade.  
 In set converse I act an all-night play ;  
 And yet we do not meet ; the woods and snows  
 They dread, and our fare, too ; their city tastes  
 Have taught them softness, and my own hard life  
 Has cost me loving friends and servants true.  
 Or if their love should bring them, me they pity
180. As if imprisoned, and straightway take their leave.  
 The rustics marvel at my venturing  
 To spurn delights, which in their hearts they think  
 To be man's highest good. They cannot know  
 That I have other joys and secret guests  
 Whom all the centuries hand down to me  
 From all the lands—for style and for their genius,  
 In peace and war, renowned—not hard to please—  
 For whom a modest corner of my cottage  
 Is room enough—who never weary me,
190. Stand not upon their dignity, but come  
 Straight at my call, and at my word depart.  
 I question each in turn ; they make reply  
 As fitting, now in song and now in prose.  
 Some unfold Nature ; some give best advice  
 For life and death ; some tell the famous deeds  
 Of ancestors, and some their own—relating  
 In meet discourse past actions ; some know how  
 To drive off tedium by a lively style.  
 Some by their jests amuse me ; some can teach
200. Patience, self-knowledge and controlled desires.  
 They're skilled in peace, in war, in bartering,  
 In ships, in tilling land ; they can relieve  
 The downcast in misfortune, and restrain  
 The too elate by pointing to the end,  
 Warning that days are swift, and life is short.  
 For all these boons they ask but small return—  
 Welcome and intercourse ; for cruel fate  
 Grants them elsewhere scant lodging and slack friends.  
 Trembling they come, reckoning as palace-halls
210. The worst retreat, till the cold clouds disperse  
 And the Pierian summer be restored.  
 They need not precious stones, or silken robes,  
 Or steaming dainties from an eating-house,  
 Or clattering noise of bustling waiters there  
 Preparing banquets rich with courses many.  
 'Tis a calm company, content with what they have,  
 Who share with me their riches, who console



- My weary couch, who, honouring my poor board,  
Refresh with heavenly food and nectar sweet.
220. Nor only at home they gather, but come gladly  
Along the woods and the nymph-haunted meads,  
Hating all crowds morose and noisy towns.  
Often we spend whole days in thickets deep ;  
My right hand holds the pen, my left the paper,  
My mind is charged with all-compelling thought.  
We pass on, and how oft unconscious fall  
Into the wild beast's lair ! How oft distracts  
My mind from high emprise some little bird,  
Who with shrill chatter seeks to draw me back !
230. Then irks it if some hind on the dark path  
Present himself, or if with humble mien  
He greet me all intent on other things  
And busy with high thoughts. A joy it is  
To quaff the silence of the mighty wood.  
Every sound spoils it, save when the purling stream  
Leaps 'neath the bank, or when the paper flaps  
And the light airs whisper among my lays.  
Oft the long shadow of my wandering form  
Has chid me loitering and urged me home.
240. Sometimes black Night herself has forced return ;  
To show my path and mark the too sharp thorns  
I had but Hesperus and the rising moon.  
Thus do I live ; if one grave care were stilled,  
Happy indeed, born 'neath a joyful star."

To his old friend Bishop Giacomo Petrarch could write freely, assured of his full sympathy. But it was a different matter when he received a letter from the warrior-brother, Stefano, couched perhaps in a tone of veiled mockery, urging him to compose a panegyric upon the life of solitude. Ridicule was ever apt to touch a tender spot in the poet's sensitive nature ; hence his reply <sup>1</sup> shows some trace of ill temper.

" You bid me discourse in brief of the condition of Solitary Life, which you say I have adopted contrary to the fashion of our generation ; whether your object is imitation or ridicule I cannot say, though of course you know. But perhaps you do not know how great a matter you would have me compress into a small space. On this subject there exist whole books by men of learning ; nevertheless, in my opinion, no man has yet praised it as it deserves. I have often, I confess, felt an impulse to write about it ; and I would have done so, but that at present I have

<sup>1</sup> *F. III. 5.* The following letter (*F. III. 6*, to the same) discusses the question whether honour is always to be preferred to material advantage ; and in maintaining the affirmative, P. distinctly implies that Stefano was inclined to take the other view. P.'s allusion to Themistocles' proposal to burn the confederate fleet, as if Stefano would know all about it, is surprising (*Frac. I. 150*).

not confidence enough in my ability or style or general knowledge. I shall never listen patiently to any who praise this mode of life, unless to a man who has first in some sort tasted its sweetness, since it abounds in countless boons, which cannot be discovered from hearsay or from books, but only from Experience ; and so I should think it useless for anyone to wish to learn them, except under her teaching. For what is the use of treating the subject with all the eloquence in the world before an audience, which either will not comprehend or will pay no attention. And so if, as you declare, you are attracted by an admiration of my solitude and by a wish to follow my example, pray do not disturb me in my other studies ; do not ask me, I mean, for a work which is beyond my powers. If, however, you question me in good faith (I repeat this, for I have grave doubts about it) and with the single aim of learning, and not of putting me to the proof, go and see for yourself ; you should scorn to owe to another what you can yourself procure. Do not scratch your own itching ears with the nails of another man's words ; you can gain the same end with a lighter scalpel, and that more honourably, than if you were to extort a treatise on a great matter, which would serve no object but to convict the reader of insincerity, and expose the writer to contempt.

“ May 4, at the fount of the Sorgues.”

If I am right in dating this letter in 1338, there can be little doubt what were the “ other studies ” in which Petrarch did not wish to be disturbed. Less than a month before,<sup>1</sup> he had conceived a design of writing an epic poem in Latin, of which the hero was to be Scipio Africanus the elder, but which in reality was to be a glorification of ancient Rome. In the *Letter to Posterity* he tells us that the idea struck him as he was roaming over the hills of Vacluse on Good Friday, which in this year fell upon April 10. He says that the name of Scipio had been dear to him from boyhood ; but he was also influenced by the fact

<sup>1</sup> I agree with A. Carlini (*Studio su L'Africa di F. P.*, Florence, 1902, p. 14) and with A. Giordano (*F. P. e l'Africa*, Fabriano, 1890) that 1338 is the most likely year for the commencement of the *Africa*—not because he was at Avignon on Good Friday, 1339 (as Carlini supposes), which cannot be proved—but because (1) it was the first Good Friday after that which he spent in Rome, whither his thoughts would naturally flee, and chiefly (2) because the penitential Sonnet 48 (*Padre del ciel*), written on Good Friday, 1338, alludes to “ days misspent ” and “ nobler aims ” in view (Lady Dacre's transl. ll. 1 and 6). It was de Sade, who in his confident, arbitrary way first fixed the Holy Week of 1339 (though wrong as to the day, which was Good Friday, not Holy Saturday) without giving a reason which does not exist (i. 403). He has been followed in sheep-like fashion by Tiraboschi, Rossetti, Fracassetti, Corradini and by H. Cochin, who should surely have known better.

that, so far as he knew, no one<sup>1</sup> had treated so grand a subject in poetry before. He had had a precursor, however, in Silius Italicus, whose name he had never heard,<sup>2</sup> and whose poem was not discovered till 1415, when Poggio unearthed a copy at the monastery of St. Gall. No doubt Petrarch would have been deterred from his attempt, if he could have foreseen that his work would be drawn into comparison with this tasteless versifier of the Silver Age. He tells us that he began it with great ardour; and he must have been working at it throughout the summer months of 1338; but although more than one book (some think four) must have been then written, he was compelled to discontinue it from various causes—probably by his more frequent visits to Avignon in the following year. Yet it must have been well advanced in 1340, for it was on the strength of this poem that he was then offered the laurel crown; and he read a portion of it to King Robert before receiving that honour. We must return to the poem in a future chapter. Now, however, it is essential to note that, with his intense longing for poetic fame, Petrarch was well aware that he must do something substantial in order to deserve it.

It would be a great mistake to suppose that he took this poem in hand as a sort of imitative exercise in a dead language which he was thus trying to galvanize into life. As we have already insisted,<sup>3</sup> Latin was at that time for scholars a living language, especially in the south; and its demise (for all but ecclesiastical purposes) was still some centuries distant. Certainly Italy was then, and would be for a long time to come, the only country

<sup>1</sup> He expressly asserts this in *F. X.* 4—"cultior de illius" (*i.e.* Scipionis) "rebus liber metricus non apparet" (*Frac. II.* 92).

<sup>2</sup> O. Occioni (*Caio Sillio Italico e il suo poema*, Florence, 1891), in defending P. against the monstrous charge of Lefebvre de Villebrune (1781) that he had a copy of Silius which he plagiarized and concealed, suggests that he was endeavouring to restore the lost poem of Silius. But it is curious that the latter is never quoted by ancient writers and only mentioned by the younger Pliny (whose letters P. did not possess) and by Martial in an epigram. The consensus of modern scholars (A. Hortis, *Sulle Cp. Lat. di Boccaccio*, p. 306, n.; Zardo, *P. e i Carraresi*, p. 258, n.; de Nohac, *P. et l'Hum.*, i. p. 193, n.; and Carlini, *op. cit.* p. 39, n.) has decided that P. did not know his name. Hortis implies that the MSS. of Martial have many variants on the name of Silius in *Lib. IV. Epig. 14.* where the *Punica* is referred to. In P.'s enumeration of Latin poets in the Tenth Eclogue, where he mentions all he had ever heard of, none can be identified certainly with Silius.

<sup>3</sup> See above, Vol. I. pp. 117, 159, 279.



which possessed an educated class capable of appreciating a revival of Latin poetry; and even within her bounds there were very few who had scholarship enough to produce it. It has been well urged by Burckhardt<sup>1</sup> that a poem like the *Africa*, though its form was borrowed, was under the existing conditions no less an original work than the *Æneid*; it was far from being the result of mere slavish imitation, as a similar effort would be to-day. And there were probably as many people then in Italy who could read and enjoy Petrarch's epic as there were readers who could really appreciate Dante's, or even Milton's, at the time of their appearance. The country was mutely—and soon to be articulately—conscious of its glorious past; and Scipio was felt to be as much a national hero as King Alfred is in our own land to-day.<sup>2</sup> The hard and fast line which we have been used to draw between ancient and modern was then simply non-existent. The awakening from mediæval torpor could only come through a revived interest in antiquity, as the Church gradually relaxed her antagonism towards it, and as men began to have eyes to understand the crumbling relics of the old civilization that lay all around them. The discovery of the vastness of the earth and of the infinity of the stellar universe, which would diminish this reverence for the past, was as yet far away. The rediscovery of man's true individuality—so marked in the ancient world, so much obscured in the intervening period—must needs be the earlier movement of the two; and in the backward state of Eastern Europe, Rome was sure to take the first place, which of right belonged to Greece. When Petrarch began the *Africa*, he was fresh from the spell cast over him by the ruins of the Eternal City; it was to her honour rather than to that of her general that his epic was really dedicated.

We may well believe that after months of solitary study, a definite poetic object became almost a salvation to the lonely poet. He tells us as much himself in a finely expressed letter<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Civilization in the Period of the Renaissance* (Middlemore's translation, 1878), i. pp. 361, 362. I owe to him, with some modification, the remarks in this paragraph.

<sup>2</sup> When Burckhardt says (*op. cit.* i. 363) that, in P.'s time Scipio was as much an object of public interest as if he were then alive, he surely exaggerates. This may have been true a century later in the heyday of Humanism, but not earlier; and all the examples he gives belong to that period.

<sup>3</sup> *F. I.* 8. The allusion to his "solitudo" shows, in spite of its occurring in the first book, that this is a Vaucluse letter.

to his friend Caloria, dated "May 1," which I should be inclined to refer to this year (1338), within three weeks of the commencement of the *Africa*. He does not mention his self-imposed task; but he speaks of the pleasure and of "the relief from his most bitter troubles," which he derived not merely from the study of ancient masterpieces, but from reading them aloud, and his own works also, during his solitary rambles. The main subject of the letter is the need of calming the mind and the feelings before entering upon any great work. And incidentally he expresses the hope that he may himself be able to exercise upon future ages the marvellously soothing power which he has himself experienced from ancient eloquence; he compares with this the fables of Amphion charming the beasts and of Orpheus moving the rocks by their song. He prophesies to his friend that if they both submit to toil, their words will reach many who are far away both in time and space. Nor must they be dismayed by the idea that all wise and noble things have already been uttered by the ancients; "though ten thousand years go by and age be piled on age," nothing will prevent genius from inventing new things. "Be of good heart; we shall not labour in vain, nor will they who shall arise in the world's dotage. The only fear is that, ere mankind cease to be, they will not have been able to penetrate the inner mysteries of truth." Such a letter shows that Petrarch, with all his self-absorption, was able to unite "high thinking" with "plain living."

But in another mood, writing about the same time <sup>1</sup> to his former pupil, the young Agapito Colonna, he puts on the black cap of the moralist and asserts that he "can hardly imagine, much less dread," a worse age than his own. Things cannot go on much longer as they are without "a public crash"; he quotes the famous stanza of Horace,<sup>2</sup> so well rendered by Conington:—

"What has not cankering time made worse?  
Viler than grandsires, sires beget  
Ourselves yet baser, soon to curse  
The world with offspring baser yet."

"Men strive after the superfluous and neglect the indispensable; so it is, and ever will be." He trusts and believes

<sup>1</sup> F. II. 10 of May 1 (?1338); it would be curious if it were written on the same day as the preceding, which bears the same subscription.

<sup>2</sup> *Odes*, III. vi. 45-48.

that the young soldier <sup>1</sup> he is addressing promises a better pledge for the future, and that with his fine moral indignation he will soon free himself from such toils. In another missive to the same youth <sup>2</sup> he invites him to supper at Vaucuse, but warns him not to expect too dainty fare.

“ You are welcome to supper when you will ; only remember that we have no market for confectionery here. A poet’s banquet awaits you—not such as Juvenal or Horace describe, but rather that pastoral one of Virgil <sup>3</sup> :

‘ A juicy apple,  
Soft chestnuts, and good store of new-pressed milk.’

The rest will be tougher—a hard and half-baked bread, perhaps a hare or an outlandish crane (and that very seldom) or even the meat of a high-smelling boar. But you know well both the place and its entertainment ; and so I warn you to come, not merely with your feet, but—as Plautus’ Parasite <sup>4</sup> so wittily says—with your teeth well shod.”

Such a visit from his patron’s cousin was an event, for even his dearest friends came but seldom. Gui Sette, the companion of his boyhood, who seems to have been a pleader in the courts of Canon Law, came occasionally, whenever he could steal a day from “ the tumult of the city ” to enjoy the peace of his friend’s abode, “ as in a harbour after storm.” In the letter of old age, which we have so often quoted, <sup>5</sup> Petrarch dwells fondly upon the charms of his retreat—“ the rural silence, the constant murmur of the clear stream, the lowing of the cattle among the echoing cliffs, the concert of birds, not by day only but by night,” for the nightingale abounded in the “ closed valley.” In the summer he often rose in the dark, and after repeating Lauds, stole out into the moonlight, so as not to disturb his servants, and wended his way alone to the mighty cave, which he entered with a sort of awed pleasure ;

“ for even by daylight and in company one shrinks from the venture. If you ask me how I found courage to do it, I reply that I was not

<sup>1</sup> Agapito at first adopted a military career, but afterwards took orders and became Bishop of Ascoli and (in 1375) a cardinal.

<sup>2</sup> *F.* II. 11.

<sup>3</sup> *Ecl.* I. 82.

<sup>4</sup> The *Captivus*, I. ii. 78—in the original it is “ calceatis dentibus.”

<sup>5</sup> *Sen.* X. 2 (to G. S.), B. ed. p. 962.



afraid of shades and ghosts, and a wolf had never been seen in the valley.<sup>1</sup> Of men I had no fear whatever; there were none but cowherds singing in the fields, or fishermen intent on their silent trade. All of them vied at all times in showing me the utmost deference. They knew that the lord of the place—their own lord—was not only my friend, but my brother—nay, the best of parents—and everyone showed me good-will.”

Of his relations with that lord—Philippe de Cabassoles, the young Bishop of Cavaillon—it is now time to speak. Petrarch says<sup>2</sup> that before going to Vaucluse, he only knew him by sight. But it was obviously necessary to pay him a visit of respect, either during one of his short stays at his Vaucluse castle, or by a walk over the hills to his chief residence at Cavaillon, six miles away. This was a quiet<sup>3</sup> country town of Roman foundation (“Cabellio”) on the right bank of the Durance, lying on an ancient highway between Gap and Arles. Pliny says that it was “a Latin town,” which implies that it was a civil colony of settlers from Italy; but its only Roman relic to-day is a fragment of a triumphal arch,<sup>4</sup> half buried in the soil. It was now the cathedral town<sup>5</sup> of Vaucluse and its neighbourhood; and its Bishop had for a long period been also the “feudal lord” of the valley.<sup>6</sup>

Philippe de Cabassoles was of a noble Provençal family, which had rendered devoted service to the House of Anjou and stood high in its favour. The branch to which he belonged had its seat at Cavaillon, where he was educated; and his early promotion was an instance of Pope John’s disregard of the canonical rules

<sup>1</sup> P. is evidently speaking of his early days, for in the same letter he says that, before he left the valley, wolves made several incursions in packs upon the flocks of the villagers, probably during a cold winter.

<sup>2</sup> *Var.* 64 (to the Bishop) (Frac. III. 484).

<sup>3</sup> P. says it was so free from bustle and noise that the Bishop could lead the solitary life in the town; and Socrates used to remark that it was “small, but honourable,” like Edessa, which Abgarus offered to the Saviour (*Vit. Sol.* II. x. 2). Whence did P. get the exact words of the Abgarus letter, unless he had Rufinus’ translation of Eusebius?

<sup>4</sup> The shaft of the arch is said to be visible in the cellars of the former episcopal palace.

<sup>5</sup> Like so many of the smaller sees, it was abolished at the Revolution when it was merged in the archdiocese of Avignon.

<sup>6</sup> Raymond V., Count of Toulouse, ceded half of the lordship to the Bishop in 1171—tradition says in gratitude for the healing of a withered leg; but in the next century (1258) he is found holding it in fief from Count Alphonse of Poitiers—a merely nominal arrangement, for he held it in freehold under the Pope as sovereign of the Comtat Venaissin (Courtet, *op. cit.*).

as to age, and also of his policy of appointing bishops from the families of "grands seigneurs" in the diocese. Though a year younger than Petrarch, Philippe had been made successively Canon (at the age of twelve), Archdeacon and Provost of the Cathedral of his native town; and in August, 1334, the same Pope made him its Bishop, though still a year below the proper age. The brief of his appointment alludes to his "luminous" knowledge of letters and the "elegance" of his personal character.<sup>1</sup> The official description was strictly accurate; and nearly forty years later Petrarch could speak of him as at the time of their first acquaintance, "then a little bishop, but always a great man."<sup>2</sup> He was of a simple nature, and his piety was unaffected; his love of literature amounted to a passion; and there exist in manuscript some letters of his "*De Nugis Curialium et miseriâ Curiarum*,"<sup>3</sup> which would probably testify to his dislike of public business. Yet, as we shall see in the sequel, he was often chosen for different posts, and ended his life as Patriarch of Jerusalem and a Cardinal.

No authentic portrait of the Bishop survives; but one which is said to represent him depicts an eager, energetic face of oval shape, but rather austere lines, which is lit up by a veiled smile.<sup>4</sup> As he had a family connexion with Avignon, he would have heard of Petrarch, if not as a love-sick poet, yet as the learned secretary of Cardinal Colonna. At any rate the two men were drawn to each other at once; and the poet never found a truer friend than this highly placed dignitary, who was his ecclesiastical and feudal superior. The Bishop loved him, he says, "not as a bishop, but as a brother"<sup>5</sup>; and writing to him twenty years later,<sup>6</sup> Petrarch speaks of his affection, his sweet conversation, and the unheard-of familiarity to which he admitted him without loss of dignity. The poet, if abundant in compliment, was never deficient in real gratitude; he says that if he were to pass through Lethe, he could

<sup>1</sup> "Vir litterarum scientiâ luminosus, morum elegantia insignitus." Brief of August 16, 1334 (in de Sade, I. 361, n.).

<sup>2</sup> *Ep. Post.* (Frac. I. 7).

<sup>3</sup> "*De Nugis Curialium*" was the sub-title of John of Salisbury's *Policraticus* (completed in 1156), and it was the chief title of the more miscellaneous work of Walter Map (written 1187-1189); but in this borrowed title the Bishop evidently had in view the Roman Curia, and it is significant that P. addressed to him S.T. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Fuzet (*op. cit.*), p. 117.

<sup>5</sup> *Ep. Post.* (*ibid.*).

<sup>6</sup> *Var.* 64 (written about 1359).

never forget the Bishop's kindness—how he welcomed him on arrival, chid him for not coming, and visited him personally if his exhortations were of no avail. In another letter <sup>1</sup> Petrarch recalls their long rambles together in the woods, forgetting the hours for meals, and their literary talk, either in the cottage or the castle, prolonged till the glimmer of dawn. The Bishop would come into the poet's study and ask for a book, and then, when offered a Cicero or a Plato, would pay his host the compliment of saying that he wanted one of his own works. Petrarch is not sure whether this request was due to his perfect knowledge of the ancients, or to his eagerness for novelty, or to a desire to learn how his friend was getting on. Sometimes the visit would be paid during his absence; and then his bailiff, who, though quite unlettered, was a vigilant guardian of his books and knew them by their covers, would try without avail to satisfy the episcopal taste, and on his master's return would ask anxiously what he had done with the document.

“ I smiled and marvelled at the good father's affection and at the simplicity of my servant; and the next time I went out, I gave the latter in sport some blank sheets of paper, of which he gravely complained on my return, when he found from you that he had been tricked.” <sup>2</sup>

It was during the period of intense study consequent on the commencement of the *Africa* <sup>3</sup> that the Bishop (it could be none but he, though he is not expressly named)<sup>4</sup> during one of his sojourns at Vaucluse entered the poet's study and seeing him fagged

<sup>1</sup> *Sen.* XIII. 11 (B. ed. 1022).

<sup>2</sup> These details are taken from *Vit. Sol.* II. x. 1.—a work which is dedicated to the Bishop and written in the form of a letter.

<sup>3</sup> The story is given in *F.* XIII. 7 (to P. de Rainzeville in 1352). The translation by Robinson and Rolfe (*op. cit.* p. 163) is too free and gives a wrong impression. There is nothing about “taking up the *Africa* again after a long period of neglect,” which would oblige us to date the incident in 1341. By the phrase “quod inter manus meas diutius jam pependit” P. means “which has already (in 1352) hung upon my hands too long.” Had their rendering been right, he must have written “tum pependerat”; and (just before) he says it was when he had begun his *Africa* with such ardour as the real Africa felt under the rays of the July sun. The reading of the Paris MS. here, though it does not alter the sense, is superior to Fracassetti's and involves a change in punctuation, which makes the meaning quite clear. Had the date been 1341, the friend must have been Azzo da Correggio.

<sup>4</sup> P. calls him “amicum in sublimis amicitiae sunmo gradu.” Perhaps (though not necessarily) the last phrase alludes to his rank.



with his toil, said he had a favour to ask which would give him great pleasure and be very easy to grant. Petrarch, unwilling to deny him and convinced that his intentions must be friendly, gave the required promise before he heard the request. "Give me," said the Bishop, "the keys of your cupboard"; and on his wondering compliance, pushed all his books and writing materials inside, saying as he left:

" 'I proclaim you a ten-days' holiday, and according to the compact, I forbid you to read or write during that time.' I saw the object of his ruse; but while to him I appeared at leisure, I seemed to myself to have lost a limb. What was the result? That day passed wearily, seeming longer than a year; on the next I had a headache from morning to night; at the dawn of the third I began to feel symptoms of fever. When my friend returned, and saw the state of the case, he gave me back my keys, and I at once recovered. Seeing, as he said, that I lived on work, he never after made a similar request."

I should date this incident in the summer months of 1338 when the friendship had had time to ripen; but his first letter<sup>1</sup> to the Bishop is dated February 25th preceding. It is a letter of condolence on the death of his correspondent's brother, Isnard, who had been drowned during a voyage through the Red Sea<sup>2</sup>; and it is couched in respectful rather than intimate terms. A letter of condolence, difficult as it is to write, scarcely deserves translation; but this long specimen, though abounding in Petrarch's favourite classical instances, is not devoid of tact and good feeling.<sup>3</sup> We quote a passage recommending prayers for the dead.

"He, Who cannot deceive or be deceived, has given us an assurance that we shall one day come to that place, to which we

<sup>1</sup> *F. II. 1.*

<sup>2</sup> The next letter in the collection (*F. II. 2*) is addressed to "An Unknown," who had lost a friend by drowning in the Ægyptian Sea, and De Sade (*I. 363*) supposed that it was also addressed to the Bishop. But this is plainly impossible; for here P. severely blames his correspondent for unmanly grief at the loss of his friend's body, while he lauds the Bishop for his brave bearing of his loss. The language is lacking in the affectionate respect shown in *F. II. 1.*, where it is not distinctly said (though hinted at) that Isnard died by drowning, and the phrase italicized (see next page) implies his burial.

<sup>3</sup> I do not see why Mrs. Jerrold (*p. 56*) should call the letter "conventional"; it is far from being merely formal.

trust your brother has passed. But if you say 'I am torn and tormented with the longing to see my brother again,' you have the same relief as those who are parted from their dearest by absence. They cherish their memory and guard their image in their very heart's shrine; they love them, speak of them, wish them a prosperous journey. Do that, as I am sure you have done already; enthrone your brother in that part of your heart, whence no oblivion could expel him. Love him in his *tomb*, as you loved him in life, or even more warmly. You can thus force him to return to you by pious and constant remembrance. Pray that he may have an auspicious journey—that, spurning the snares of the Evil One, he may reach his true home. For the place of our pilgrimage is not our country, and we have been vainly longing for him while he journeys to a better; this country is but exile, and he has started on his homeward way. Let us pray that he may have a safe and easy passage. This we may do, for it will do him good; it is a duty of affection to pray for the dead. Tears are women's weapons—unbecoming to men, except rarely and in moderation; they injure those who shed them, and fail to profit those for whom they are shed."

In this and in the following year Petrarch had the unexpected pleasure of welcoming at Vacluse some distant friends, who had arrived at Avignon on business.<sup>1</sup> One of these was his chosen confessor, Dionisio Roberti. The friar had made a special study of astrology, and his proficiency in that supposed science had attracted the notice of King Robert, who was engrossed by it in his declining years. In 1338 the King invited him to Naples, and in March, 1339, conferred upon him the Bishopric of Monopoli in Calabria.<sup>2</sup> But before this he passed through Avignon on a journey from Paris to Florence, where the royal invitation may perhaps have reached him. Anyhow it seems clear that his promotion was the result, and not the cause, of his journey.

We have seen that Petrarch was anxious to find a literary patron in the King; and this news from Dionisio would naturally suggest to him a chance of introduction to Robert by means of the friar. He therefore indited a letter<sup>3</sup> in Latin verse, inviting

<sup>1</sup> I refer to Azzo da Correggio and Guglielmo da Pastrengo as well as to Dionisio.

<sup>2</sup> Signa. Magrini (p. 73), ignoring a note of Fracassetti (*It. I.* 423-426), supposes that the friar only left Paris in consequence of his promotion. But there was evidently a previous invitation; for *F. IV.* 2, written after Dionisio's departure from Avignon, says nothing of his new dignity, and must have been written in January, 1340.

<sup>3</sup> *Ep. Metr.* I, iv,

Dionisio to visit him in his rural retreat. This, however, was only its form; in reality it was an adroit panegyric on the sapient monarch, whose contemporaries gave him the inappropriate title of "The Wise." During his long visit to his Provençal realm several years before<sup>1</sup> the King had paid a visit to the Fountain of Vaucluse in company with his consort, Sancia, and his niece Clemenza, widow of Louis X. of France; and Petrarch says that the incidents of the royal visit were still fresh in the minds of the peasantry, though it only lasted during the few hours of a summer day. In his exordium—a portentous sentence extending to fifty-two hexameters—the poet enumerates all the natural charms which might induce Dionisio to visit the spot,—such as the mountains, the caves, the clear stream (with mythological allusions to its feathered songsters)—and finally decides that if all these fail, he could not refrain from tracing the footsteps of "the Wise King" on that memorable day. Petrarch could himself point out the very place where the lovely queens rested, while their courtiers were engaged according to their tastes—some in hunting, or fishing, or sleeping, others in preparing an "al fresco" repast; but the supreme spectacle was a huge poplar near the fountain, beneath whose shadow the royal Solomon reclined apart, revolving the cares of state. With a poet's license, Petrarch imagines the thoughts coursing through that royal brain, as it beheld the marvels of the fount and ruminated on his personal destinies and on those of mankind. The poem is a study in dexterous adulation—all the more ingenious that it was not directly addressed to its subject. It concludes with a warm invitation to Vaucluse, which we cannot doubt was accepted during the autumn of 1338.

In a letter of 1373 to one of the friends of his old age,<sup>2</sup> Petrarch says that during his early sojourn at Vaucluse<sup>3</sup> men of rank and ability, both from France and Italy, came to Vaucluse from Avignon with no other object but to see and converse with himself, its literary hermit. Some of them prepared themselves an

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. I. p. 376. His visit lasted four years (1320-1324); and Rossetti's statement (in his *Poesie Minori di F. P.* iii. 253) that the Vaucluse excursion took place in 1320 may or may not be true. The precise year is of no importance.

<sup>2</sup> *Sen.* XVI. 7 (Frac.) to Donnino da Piacenza.

<sup>3</sup> He speaks of himself as at the time "admodum adolescens" (quite a young man), which (as so often in *Sen.*) is chronologically inexact.



introduction by sending him splendid gifts in advance, which he doubtless shared with his friends. Of these strangers he names but one—Pierre Bercheur, a French Benedictine monk, who maintained a correspondence with him and welcomed him with enthusiasm at Paris more than twenty years later.<sup>1</sup> Pierre was a rather ponderous lexicographer, who wrote a *Moral Dictionary of the Bible* and other works of the same kind,<sup>2</sup> besides undertaking a translation of Livy at the behest of his royal patron. I should be inclined to guess, in spite of Petrarch's positive indication of date, that his memory deceived him, and that most of these distinguished men paid him their visits during his last stay in the valley (1351–1353), when he was much more famous.

In the autumn, however, his company was certainly sought by the two Italian friends, Guglielmo da Pastrengo and Azzo da Correggio, at whose instance he had pleaded the cause of Mastino della Scala before the Curia in 1335. They had now been sent to Avignon on a similar, but much more serious errand. It will be remembered<sup>3</sup> that this able young despot (he was only twenty-nine) had aspired to the dominion of the whole of Northern Italy; but his ambition had been frustrated by an alliance of Venice and Florence against him. In 1338 he seemed to be on the brink of ruin; for the Venetian army had invaded his eastern possessions, and the Florentines appeared under the walls of Verona. He suspected that there were traitors in his camp, and is said to have been persuaded by his uncle Azzo that at their head was his kinsman, Bartolomeo della Scala,<sup>4</sup> Bishop of Verona. On August 27, while riding with Azzo through the street, he had an altercation with the Bishop on the steps of his palace, and then and there plunged a dagger into his heart.<sup>5</sup> Realizing at once that the consequences of his criminal act might be fatal, since he was in bad odour with Benedict for his support of "the Bavarian," he forthwith sent off the two friends with proofs of his kinsman's perfidy, and humbly craved the Pope's absolution.

<sup>1</sup> See *F.* XXII. 13, 14 and Chap. XXXII. (below).

<sup>2</sup> His works, the *Reductorium* and *Inductorium Morale*, contained a "tropological" exposition of Scripture, and were published in folio at Basle, Paris, and Venice in the sixteenth century (Cave, *Hist. Litt.* II. 65A).

<sup>3</sup> See Vol. I. p. 409.

<sup>4</sup> De Sade states (i. 377) that documentary proof was forthcoming of the Bishop's complicity, and that he had himself boasted of it.

<sup>5</sup> According to Corio (*Storia di Milano*) he was only struck by Mastino and killed by an attendant.

Whether from the delays of the Curia or the opposition of powerful interests, he did not obtain this for more than a year (September 18, 1339), and meanwhile the formidable league against him was dissolved. His envoys seem to have remained at Avignon at least nine months.

Guglielmo da Pastrengo was a lawyer by profession<sup>1</sup>; he was also an eager student of classical literature, and Fracasetti says that his own age considered him as second only to Petrarch in that department of erudition. He composed a dictionary of famous writers of all ages and countries, which he styled *De Viris Illustribus*, and which was most incorrectly printed at Venice in 1547. It is said to be even longer than the *Myriobiblon* of Photius. Like Boccaccio's works of the same character, it is a rather dry compilation; but it is a great testimony to the author's enthusiastic industry. His attraction to Petrarch has been already mentioned; and their acquaintance ripened during this visit into warm friendship.

On his inquiring for the poet, he heard that the latter had actually ridden in from Vacluse to see him, but in the middle of the night had incontinently returned with his object unfulfilled. Pastrengo therefore sent off a messenger at once with this brief expostulation<sup>2</sup>:

"My dear fellow, in what den are you lurking? Where are you hidden? I went to look for you at Lælius' lodgings and knocked at the door; no voice or person gave reply. What is the meaning of this? Come out and show yourself to your longing friend. I am here—the man you came to seek."

Petrarch's reply,<sup>3</sup> which he sent in the evening by the same messenger, gives the rather lame excuse that his "old cares" had returned upon him with full force after he had entered the ever-odious city. He was like a man, who had been often shipwrecked, putting out to sea again from a safe harbour, surrounded by dangerous rocks and the raging of winds and waves. His

<sup>1</sup> Fracasetti says (*It.* II., 437) that he was "a notary and a judge" at Verona. I should have thought that judges, even at that date, were exclusively taken from the class of advocates, and that Guglielmo's mission to Avignon proved that the latter was his usual rôle; but perhaps he combined both branches of the profession.

<sup>2</sup> B. ed. p. 1126. Here, as in all the folios, the letter is wrongly ascribed to P.

<sup>3</sup> *Var.* 13.

trouble laid hold upon him as if he were a disobedient, runaway slave ; and waking in the night in dread of the old chains and tortures, he slipped away before the dawn. He asks his friend's pardon, and begs him to plead his cause before " the insane vulgar," who accuse him of madness for preferring the quiet of the country to their cherished pursuits. There his mind had begun to be released from its long captivity by an indescribable sweetness, like that of the heavenly life. He says no definite word of " Laura " or of his passion, for perhaps his friend knew nothing of either ; but it seems to have been a sudden fit of love-melancholy, which had come upon him with such power as to compel him to flee from the scenes of his old misery.

His friend's answer <sup>1</sup> deserves quotation, though perhaps to our taste too " euphuistic " in expression. It shows Guglielmo not merely as a ripe classical scholar, but as a man of lively imagination and a warm-hearted friend. It shows, too, that he had already seen Vacluse, probably on an excursion during his first mission.

" I found your disappearance hard to bear, my friend ; for I miss your pleasant company, your living voice, your sweet eloquence, nor can I understand on what terms the absence of one whose conversation is so dear can be other than sad ; but your letter came as a solace to my mind, sick and weary and distracted with business, when it informed me that you had burst the bars of your hated prison, broken your chains, loosed your fetters, escaped from the treadmill, breasted the stormy sea, come to the land you longed for—with your carking cares stilled and a gentle calm succeeding to the sea's rage. Now I am free to picture some of the details of your unshackled flight ; I often seem to see you, roused by the birds' concert or the prattle of the rushing stream, then with the rosy horses of the dawn mounting the hills and wandering up their dewy slopes ; whence, seated on a grassy sod, you look from afar upon the sail-decked sea <sup>2</sup> or the cultivated lands below ; you have your papers with you, you muse profoundly and frequently jot down something, to be in good humour with yourself. When the sun gets high, you go back home to a repast like those of Curius and Fabricius, and rest your limbs for awhile. Then, to avoid the scorching heat, you enter the really closed valley, whence the eastern mountains throw a shade from the turning sun. There lies the marvellous fount,

<sup>1</sup> B. ed. p. 1127. The remark in n. 2, p. 81 also applies to this letter.

<sup>2</sup> This is a too daring flight of fancy, for the sea cannot be seen from the hills of Vacluse.



gushing from their roots, sobbing its silver waters over a hundred rocks in as many cascades, which with a thundering sound, as the whirlpool dashes into the depths of the valley, re-echoing its din among the crags and sunken rocks, grows but a moment after into a gentle river. There that vast and terrific cave—now mute with its waters silent, at other times belching its tremendous flood—affords a marvellously cool temperature in the heat. There, too, lies another grotto, overhanging the pure water transparent as glass—a very haunt of the nymphs. On that spot you have your chosen seat in deep shade, where the ivy climbing over the rocks protects its poet. You feast your eyes on the delightful prospect, and whetting the edge of your keen intellect, reveal its innermost secrets. Then Helicon, Aganippe, Aon, the Muses are at hand; then the Fauns, Nymphs, Satyrs, Pans, Naiads, Oreads, Dryads, sing to you, and give their applause. Nor, with such a choir around you, do you pine in torpid idleness; your leisure is work; you do not move till your paper is full, though your hands may be empty. These boons you do not enjoy in solitude, as perhaps you think; I am at your side, my heart warms with yours, and I rejoice in your joy. Farewell, my cherished one, and remember him, who is your other self.”

This missive, it seems, had been entrusted to Lælius, who was then at Avignon on a visit from Rome and had delayed its transmission in order to deliver it in person with a gift from the writer. However, he had dispatched it by messenger instead of bringing it himself, and Petrarch sent the following acknowledgment <sup>1</sup>:

“After my remonstrance at his delay, which had some reasonable excuse, Lælius has at last sent me <sup>2</sup> your elegant and beautiful letter. He longs to greet you, and I imagine you will have him and Ludwig and my brother Gherardo as your guests to-day or to-morrow, and sate their thirsty souls with the water of my fount,<sup>3</sup> already the worse for its journey thither, but

<sup>1</sup> *Var.* 30 (B. ed. 1129). It is curious that in the folio editions (if they follow the order of P.'s MS.) this letter has become separated from the three preceding, although there can be no doubt that it is the fourth of the series.

<sup>2</sup> I cannot see how M. Cochin (*Frère de P.* p. 48) derives proof from this letter that Gherardo was now living with his brother at Vacluse. It seems to me, on the contrary, to prove that he was at Avignon, and that Lælius had told P. (in a letter) that he was going with the two others to visit Guglielmo in that city. Rossetti, too (iii. App. I. p. 69), thinks Gherardo and the two older friends were with P. when he wrote it; but if so, why did Lælius “send” the letter (“misit”), and why did not P. give them some of the melon?

<sup>3</sup> Fracassetti (*It.* ii. 439) supposes that this merely refers to the water

still bearing some traces of its origin. Your splendid melon I have not merely eaten but devoured—giving a share to no one, except a Nymph, who in her gaudy attire<sup>1</sup> already plans a banquet for the gods—some wedding of Neptune, or entertainment for Nereus or the Tritons or some other marine or river deity.

“ The spotted skin, touching the Nymph’s soft feet  
Aroused the envy of her sisters fair ;  
Proudly beneath the bridge she whirled to greet  
Thee with a garland from her lovely hair ;  
Thy praise she sings, coursing the meadows sweet  
And triumphs peerless ’midst her comrades there.”<sup>2</sup>

We know that in the following spring or summer of 1339, Guglielmo spent some time at Vacluse ; for we learn from a later letter<sup>3</sup> that he lent his aid to his friend in constructing what Petrarch calls his “ upper garden ” there. This, as already stated, was on the left bank of the pool which lies immediately below the cave of the source. It must have been near, if not below, the level of that pool, when the water was in spate ; and the work involved not only the bringing of soil to mix with the rocky detritus on the narrow ledge chosen, but also the rolling of huge rocks to the pool’s edge to prevent the invasion of the spring and autumn floods. Guglielmo assisted in the latter task, which must have meant heavy toil ; and Petrarch recalls how in the intervals they laid their weary limbs on a knoll and discussed ancient literature, comparing the Greek and Latin poets.<sup>4</sup> This was the beginning of his great battle with the Nymphs, which we

of the Sorgues passing Avignon after its mixture with the Rhône. But there would then be no point in “ sitientes,” for the water of the smaller stream would be lost in the larger, even if people were given to drinking the Rhône water. I prefer Rossetti’s explanation (*Poesie Minori di F. P.* iii. App. I. p. 70), that P. was sending his friend some water direct from the fount, which after bottling would lose some of its freshness.

<sup>1</sup> Rossetti (*loc. cit.*) makes the strange suggestion that the “ Nymph ” was a young peasant of Vacluse, to whom Guglielmo had taken a fancy, and who would put on her “ painted stockings ” (“ *pictis pedibus* ”)—which he asserts was the custom—in honour of the visit. This is much too far-fetched, and misses the point of the “ *vers d’esprit*.” The “ Nymph,” as Fracassetti rightly says, was a dancing ripple of the stream, on which P. threw the spotted (“ *discolor* ”) skin of the melon. I am sure that in the last line “ *nec* ” should be read for “ *et*.”

<sup>2</sup> The poem is in rhymed hexameters ; the version above, which is far from literal, purposely avoids the heroic metre as unsuited to the subject.

<sup>3</sup> *Ep. Metr.* III. iii. (to G. da P.).

<sup>4</sup> *Ep. cit.* ll. 5, 6 and 30–35.

shall describe later,<sup>1</sup> when these earlier labours had been overwhelmed by their fury.

Not long after his friend's departure Vaucluse was visited by a tremendous thunderstorm at night, which the poet describes with great spirit in a verse-letter<sup>2</sup> to the Cardinal. Nothing could be more graphic than his account of the sudden blotting out of the stars, the sheets of rain causing the stream to rise, the terrific claps of thunder which shook the house, and the panic of the villagers. In the vivid flashes of lightning the mountains themselves seemed to him to be discharging their torrents on all sides and overturning the woods below. The old priest of St. Vêran first said a mass in the middle of the storm; and then, fearing for the safety of the edifice, fastened a rope to the heavier bronze ornaments of the church and dragged them to the presbytery. The poem is marvellously descriptive for a mediæval writer; the lines go with a swing well suited to the subject; and the din and swish of the deluge is reproduced with telling effect. These metrical expedients make it superior, in my opinion, to his more famous description of the tempest at Naples four years later.<sup>3</sup> But the end of the letter is rather a bathos. Writing apparently the next day, the poet appeals to the Cardinal for help. The remedies he suggests are first a poem (? as an exorcism), then some unspecified Eastern gems supposed to be talismans against thunder, thirdly, some herbs for the same purpose, and lastly—here, perhaps, we have the real object of the poem—some laurels<sup>4</sup> to plant in his garden, though he admits that he has tried them already and that the soil does not suit them! The date of the poem is fixed by the fact that his "offence to the nymphs" had been recent, and that they had now taken their full revenge.

We have very few letters of Petrarch that can be definitely assigned to the year 1339; but there are indications that after the summer of that year he had sufficiently conquered his antipathy to "the hateful city" to reside in it for a considerable

<sup>1</sup> See Chap. XIX., below.

<sup>2</sup> *Ep. Metr.* I. x.

<sup>3</sup> *F.* V. 5. See Chap. XVIII.

<sup>4</sup> According to Sir Thomas Browne, *Vulgar Errors*, Book II. Chap. 17 (*Works*, Bohn, 1884, i. 207), the bay or laurel was regarded as a preservative against lightning: he says (without refs.) that Tiberius habitually wore a wreath of bay with that object. Quoting Vicomercatus, he asserts that bay-trees have been found in Italy blasted by lightning, and therefore considers the idea a mere superstition.



part of the following autumn and winter. Indeed, in spite of the impression given by the *Letter to Posterity*, there is reason to suspect <sup>1</sup> that he did not again pass a whole winter at Vacluse till that of 1346-1347. This change in his habits may have been mainly due to the exhortations of Pastrengo; but probably the novelty of his solitude was now wearing off, and he was finding that it was no sovereign remedy against the pains of love.<sup>2</sup> There is a letter to Lælius,<sup>3</sup> which I should ascribe to the time of the latter's Avignon sojourn in 1339, containing proof (unless it is all pure chaff) that his morbid fancies were returning upon him. He imagines a little bird—he does not know its name <sup>4</sup>—which flits in and out among the vine-leaves, taking the shape of Cupid and aiming unerring darts at his heart. Perhaps his two Veronese friends were of opinion that his solitude was injuring his mental balance, and therefore exerted their influence to make him mix more freely with his fellow-men.

At any rate this year (1339) there arrived at Avignon two distinguished strangers, with whom his intimacy was such as to imply more frequent residence there. These were Simone Martini,<sup>5</sup> the artist of Siena, and Barlaam, the Calabrian monk.

Simone was a pupil of Giotto, whom Petrarch remembered seeing at Avignon in his childhood <sup>6</sup>; and according to him neither master nor pupil was remarkable for personal beauty, in spite of their extraordinary power of depicting it.<sup>7</sup> The Sienese painter had already acquired great fame in Italy, where he had painted frescos in the Florentine church of Sta. Maria Novella <sup>8</sup> and in the Campo Santo at Pisa. His work was much admired by a Cardinal who was passing through Siena; and the result was an invitation to him to remove to Avignon and adorn some of

<sup>1</sup> See *Sen.* XVI. 7 (Frac. ii. 505) and *Ep. Metr.* III. i., and cf. *F.* VIII. 3, though there he talks most inexactly of his "ten years' stay" at Vacluse.

<sup>2</sup> As St. Augustine makes him confess in the *Secret* (Dial. iii.).

<sup>3</sup> *Ep. Metr.* I. viii.

<sup>4</sup> See ll. 12 and 13 (the first is omitted in the folios).

<sup>5</sup> Inscriptions on his pictures prove that this ("son of Martin") was his true name, although Vasari calls him "Memmi" and makes him brother to Lippo of that name. According to de Sade the error arose from the misunderstanding of an inscription (T. II. Notes i. p. 76). The two painters worked together, but were not related.

<sup>6</sup> According to Vasari (*Lives of the Painters*, Bohn, i. 106) Giotto quitted Avignon in 1316, after the death of Clement V.

<sup>7</sup> *F.* V. 17, to Gui Sette (Frac. I. 295).

<sup>8</sup> Vasari states (*op. cit.* I. 185) that he introduced into these frescos

its churches with his pictures.<sup>1</sup> There is documentary evidence that he settled there with his wife and his brother Donato in the spring of 1339<sup>2</sup>; and as his wife was still at Avignon some years after his death in 1344,<sup>3</sup> Vasari is probably mistaken in supposing that he ever returned to Italy, except perhaps for a short visit. It must have been at an early stage<sup>4</sup> in Petrarch's acquaintance with the artist that he induced him (in 1339 or 1340) to take a portrait of "Laura" (probably in miniature), which the poet was to retain as a personal possession. As the lady would probably have refused to sit for it if she had been aware of the scheme, an Italian writer<sup>5</sup> has supposed that there were no formal sittings, but that Simone furtively took a rapid sketch on some public occasion when she was present, or perhaps he did it from memory, after careful study of her face. But since Petrarch declares that the resemblance was marvellous, she or her husband may have been induced by the poet's friends to order a larger portrait, from which Simon secretly took a miniature for his friend before it left his studio. At least we know from the poet's own admission in the *Secret*<sup>6</sup> that it remained in his keeping as a priceless treasure. He rewarded his friend—if in no other way—by writing two sonnets in praise of his work; and it is an illustration of the vast posthumous reputation of Petrarch that Vasari declares<sup>7</sup> that these lines "give more lustre to the poor life of Messer Simon than it has received, or ever will receive, from all his works." This was not because he thought meanly of him as a portraits of P. and "Laura"; but this is denied with good reason by Lanzi (*History of Painting in Italy*, I. 274).

<sup>1</sup> There is no record in the papal accounts that he painted any of the frescos in the Pontifical Palace (Okey, *Avignon*, p. 230).

<sup>2</sup> On February 5, 1339, he was commissioned by a Sienese priest to act for him in a suit at Avignon, as soon as he arrived there (*Documenti per la Storia dell'arte Senese*, I. 216, 264). Okey (*op. cit.*) says in error that he arrived in 1338.

<sup>3</sup> Vasari (*op. cit.* I. 189) asserts that he was buried in Siena in 1345, and quotes the inscription on his tomb (p. 191); but according to the *Necrologia* of Siena he died at Avignon about July, 1344.

<sup>4</sup> Some slight proof of this is given in P.'s note in the autograph MS. where he says—on November 29, 1357—that he had then revised these two sonnets "post mille annos." We know also (see n. 6, below) that when he wrote the *Secret*—i.e. in the winter 1342-1343—he already possessed the picture.

<sup>5</sup> Ignazio Cantu, *P. induce il pittore Simon Memmi a ritrattare furtivamente i lineamenti di Madonna Laura*. In the *Album d'Esposizioni di belle arti*, 1853, Anno XV. pp. 107-114.

<sup>6</sup> *Opera* (B. ed.), p. 403.

<sup>7</sup> Vasari (*op. cit.*), I. 182.

painter, for he speaks of his works with enthusiasm, but because the popularity of the *Rime* was at its height in the "Cinquecento," when 136 editions<sup>1</sup> issued from the Press. I quote the 57th Sonnet in Mrs. Jerrold's version (slightly altered):<sup>2</sup>

" Had Polycletus<sup>3</sup> gazed in rivalry,  
 With others who were famous in his art,  
 Long years they had not seen the smallest part  
 Of that perfection I am conquered by.  
 In Paradise was Simon certainly,  
 From whence this gentle lady came, and there  
 He saw her, and portrayed her face so fair  
 To give us faith in such divinity.  
 Truly the work was native unto heaven,  
 And there could be conceived, but not with us,  
 Where members to the soul for veil are given.  
*A kindness 'twas ; nor could he this have done*  
*When he had felt our heat and cold, and thus*  
*His eyes to see things mortal had begun."*

The 58th Sonnet, which is less happy, expresses regret that the painter could not endow his work with thought and speech.

By some recent writers<sup>4</sup> it has been suggested that this portrait

<sup>1</sup> I give the figures of Mr. Fiske in the *Catalogue of the P. Collection* (Cornell University Library), 1916, Introd. p. xvi. There were but sixteen editions in the seventeenth century (a dreary period for Italian literature, when there were only three of the *Commedia*). There was no edition of P. between 1651 and 1711, and only forty-seven in the eighteenth century.

<sup>2</sup> I trust this liberty may be forgiven ; I do not claim to have improved her rendering, unless in making the meaning rather clearer. The changes are placed in italics (see *F. P., Poet and Humanist*, pp. 138, 139).

<sup>3</sup> By some it has been felt as a difficulty that Polycletus was a sculptor, not a painter (as P. knew well, cf. *F. V.* 17) ; but there is no reason why P. should not illustrate the one art by the other. In the 100th Sonnet (written about five years later), which also alludes to this portrait, he groups Zeuxis with Praxiteles and Phidias—the two latter being sculptors. In the eighteenth century a Florentine gentleman named Peruzzi possessed two marble portraits in relief (inscribed as Simon's work "in 1344"—a year which P. spent entirely in Italy) ; but there is nothing to identify them with P. and "Laura." De Sade (Note xii. in t. II. pp. 71-79) devotes a long passage to expressing his doubt on the subject, because Simon was not a sculptor. He might have spared himself the trouble, for the above sonnet in line 7 (though the translator does not show it) expressly says that "Laura's" likeness was on *parchment* (*la ritrasse in carte*) ; and the word "stil" (in both sonnets) must mean a pencil, and not a chisel.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Hollway-Calthrop (p. 29) says guardedly that this portrait may possibly be the one by Simon. Cicognara (as quoted in *Frac. It.* I. 384) thought it might have been copied from the original, now lost. De Sade thinks that a portrait long preserved in his family of a "Laura" in a red dress may be the one in question. There is a portrait like this now in the Museum at Avignon ; it represents a lady of no great beauty with a flower in her hand.



still exists in a miniature in the Laurentian Library at Florence ; but experts are confident that it is a work of the fifteenth and not of the fourteenth century.<sup>1</sup> While the companion-portrait of Petrarch is almost absurd for its lack of refinement, that supposed to be " Laura " is certainly lovely, but rather spoilt by the lowered eyelids. That Petrarch could have destroyed the portrait during his life is scarcely credible ; but he may have ordered its destruction after his death, for it is not mentioned in his will.

Another act of kindness which Simon performed for his poet-friend was to furnish him with a painting<sup>2</sup> as a frontispiece to his fine manuscript of Virgil, which still exists in the Ambrosian Library at Milan. The picture has five principal figures—those of Virgil and Servius<sup>3</sup> his chief commentator, together with Æneas, a vine-pruner and a shepherd, personifying respectively the Æneid, the Georgics, and the Eclogues. Along with a fly-leaf containing the famous autobiographical notes, it has been bound into the volume. A note in the poet's hand shows that it had some adventures while it belonged to him, which were as nothing compared to those in store for it after his death.<sup>4</sup> " This book was stolen from me on November 1 in the year 1326,<sup>5</sup> and afterwards restored on April 17, 1338," which was the Friday in Easter week. No particulars are given of the theft, but at the time of the restoration Petrarch was almost certainly at Vauclose.

The object of the mission of the Basilian monk, Bernard Barlaam, to Avignon in the summer of 1339 was to negotiate terms of union between the Greek and Latin churches ; and although in distant Constantinople he was regarded as " a secret agent," his coming created almost a sensation in the Papal City. The Eastern Emperor Andronicus III. (Palæologus) was hard pressed by the Turks, who had conquered Bithynia and advanced as far as Nicæa ; and he therefore renewed the attempt made by some

<sup>1</sup> De Nolhac (*P. et l'Hum.*), ii. 246. See Vol. I. p. 252 and n. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Beneath it are six rhymed hexameters in P.'s handwriting of which the last two are :

" Mantua Virgilium, qui talia carmina finxit,  
Sena tulit Symonem, digito qui talia pinxit."

<sup>3</sup> The volume contains Servius' commentary, and part of Donatus'.

<sup>4</sup> See below, Chap. XXXIV. (Book VII.)—already published in part in the *Fortnightly Review*, No. 474 (New Series, June, 1906).

<sup>5</sup> M. de Nolhac (i. 144) suggests that a " X " may have dropped out, because the notes exhibit no specimen of P.'s early handwriting. But surely the reason is insufficient, for the annotation may have begun later.

of his predecessors to obtain Western aid by placating the Pope. The moment was to the last degree unpropitious ; the enthusiasm for the proposed Crusade had died down, and the minds of men were fixed on the gigantic struggle already opening between the Western Powers. But a project for the reunion of Christendom always excited lively interest, especially when the Roman See found " the ball at its feet " and saw signs of success on its own terms.

Barlaam was a fitting intermediary because he was a Western (some say a Latin) by birth, having been born at Seminara near Reggio in Calabria—a province still tinctured, like the " Great Greece " of the past, with Eastern influences. He was a man of learning and of subtle intellect, but not very familiar with colloquial Latin.<sup>1</sup> Boccaccio, who was not his pupil, though he knew him <sup>2</sup> at a later period, when he had submitted to the Roman Church, speaks of him <sup>3</sup> as " a man of small body, but of very great knowledge, especially in Greek literature." But on the present occasion the monk, who was Abbot of the Monastery of the Redeemer at Constantinople, was firm in maintaining the independence of the Eastern Church. He was received by the Pope and Cardinals in Consistory, where he frankly unfolded a scheme for the convocation of a really Œcumenical Council. The Emperor, he said, was as desirous of reunion as the Pope ; but such reunion could only be permanent, if effected by a Council whose decrees his people would respect. At the moment such an assembly was impossible ; for three of the Eastern Patriarchs (Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem) were in the power of the Mahommedans ; but if a judicious Roman legate were sent to Greece, preceded or accompanied by an army of Franks sufficiently large to drive out the Turks and free the Holy Sepulchre, the Greeks would concede to persuasion what could never be accomplished by force. He also hinted that if the menace of the Turks should prove the ruin of the Eastern Empire, the addition of its resources to their power would constitute a danger for the whole of Christendom.

In the minds of his auditors the weak point of the envoy's arguments was that the deliverance of the Eastern Empire must

<sup>1</sup> This is probably P.'s meaning in *F.* XVIII. 2 (see Chap. XV., below).

<sup>2</sup> Hortis (*op. cit. sup.*), p. 500.

<sup>3</sup> *De Geneal. Deorum*, XV. 6.

precede the proposed union of the churches. After consultation Pope Benedict coldly replied that it was useless to reopen in a fresh Council a question already decided at the Council of Lyons (1274), and that the Eastern Churches must first "return to their obedience" to the Holy See. Barlaam could only answer that the Eastern deputies to that Council were commissioned by the Emperor, and not by the Patriarchs, and therefore that the Eastern Churches could not accept its decisions. It was a weak reply; for he himself only had letters of credit as the Emperor's "secret agent," and the Latins might well demand guarantees that his promise of reunion should not prove delusive. Yet his proposals contained a concession of importance—viz. that it should be left to the Pope's Legate to convene a General Council; but his argument that men will yield to persuasion rather than to force has never had any weight with the Roman See. He also expressed a desire that the mode of stating the doctrine of the "Procession of the Holy Ghost" should be left an open question; but this, it was declared, could not be done without violating the unity of the Faith. The Pope added insult to refusal by superscribing his reply <sup>1</sup>: "To the Moderator of the Greeks and to the persons who style themselves the Patriarchs of the Eastern Churches." No doubt he could hold out no hope of affording military aid; but it was characteristic of an Avignon Pope to conceal his lessening power with the rulers of the West under a show of insolence towards his fellow-Christians.

Barlaam therefore, after a stay of some months, returned in September to Constantinople; and his reappearance three years later was in very different circumstances to be hereafter related.<sup>2</sup> It is practically certain <sup>3</sup> that Petrarch did not put himself under his tuition during this first visit; but it was probably the longer of the two, and there can be no reasonable doubt <sup>4</sup> that the poet

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon, VIII. 79; he states that he is here translating Fleury's *Ecclesiastical History*.

<sup>2</sup> See below, Chap. XV. pp. 199-203.

<sup>3</sup> From the *Secret* (Dial. ii.), written in 1342, 1343 (B. ed. p. 390), where P. uses the word "nuper" and also from *F.* XVIII. 2.

<sup>4</sup> M. de Nolhac (*op. cit.* ii. 136) is content to say that there is nothing to prove that P. knew Barlaam in 1339. (See also his study on *P. et Barlaam* in *Revue des études Grecques*, V. 94-99.) There is certainly nothing that amounts to demonstration. But in 1342 Barlaam visited Avignon not as an envoy, but as a private person; and P. would have been less likely to become intimate with him in 1342, if he had not known him before. Koerting (p. 153) seems to think that the Greek lessons took place on



made his acquaintance at the Colonna Palace and thus paved the way for his subsequent relations with one, whom he is proud to call his "friend."<sup>1</sup>

About the same time—the summer or autumn of the year 1339—we find Petrarch in correspondence with three personages of high rank, with each of whom he was brought into connexion by his more frequent residence at Avignon. The first of these was Guido Gonzaga—the eldest son of Lodovico, the lord of Mantua, already entrusted by his father with the government and policy of the city. Lodovico had wrested the lordship from his own father-in-law, Passerino Bonacossi, in 1328, and, being advanced in years, was content to leave the control of the state to his sons. The family, like many of the ruling houses of Lombardy, had for years supported the cause of "the Bavarian" and styled themselves "Perpetual Vicars of the Empire." They had thereby incurred the displeasure of the Papacy; and Guido, realizing the inconvenience of its hostility, dispatched his chancellor, Giovanni Aghinolfi of Arezzo, to Avignon to obtain absolution. During his visit—which cannot be exactly dated, but was prior to Petrarch's laurel-crowning—the envoy contracted a friendship with the poet, which lasted for many years. His Mantuan master was an eager student of literature, and had instructed him to seek out Petrarch and send him particulars of his person and occupations. Under the pressure of his diplomatic work Giovanni had confined his letters to business and neglected the last injunction, and he was twice reproved by Guido for forgetting it. When he made the acquaintance of the young poet, the fame of whose love-sonnets had reached Italy, he persuaded him to write a complimentary letter<sup>2</sup> to his patron. It is curious that in this epistle Petrarch makes no allusion to his Italian poems; but such details he doubtless left to the chancellor. His theme is rather gratitude for Guido's condescension in setting such value upon his own humble person, from which he concludes that Love is the "great leveller" of distinctions of rank. It binds by

both visits, but in that case P. would surely have made more progress than he actually did.

<sup>1</sup> *F.* XVIII. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *F.* III. II. This letter (with many more) was inscribed in the folios: "To Tommaso of Messina"; to de Sade belongs the credit of discovering to whom it was really addressed. The expression "*civem tuum*," used of Virgil, gave the needful clue.

invisible, but far from insensible, bonds the lowest to the highest, as flame to the air, the shore to the sea, and planets to their orbits. It must have been this unseen power which impelled the ruler to seek the humble poet, and become aware of his unspoken devotion. From the letters of Augustus we may see to what familiarity he admitted the poets Virgil and Horace; but while the latter had much to recommend them, Petrarch admits that he has nothing. "I should pay you my best thanks if I did not distrust my power of vying with your kindness by any words of mine." Nearly ten years were to elapse before the poet met his admirer face to face; but he was then welcomed with hospitable enthusiasm, although his letters <sup>1</sup> furnish few particulars of their subsequent relations.

Before his two Veronese friends left Avignon—which was probably in September, 1339—they induced the poet to write a verse-letter <sup>2</sup> to their patron Mastino, which is a sort of poetical "gazette" about the vast preparations then on foot for war between the nations of the West. It was the moment when the Empire threatened to throw its whole weight on the side of England; and the poet represents France as trembling in face of so mighty a coalition. Among the other allies he speaks of Hainault <sup>3</sup> as

" Making the first libation in the strife "

and of Flanders as

" subject to perpetual war "

—a phrase which crystallizes its coming experience in the next six centuries. At the close he expresses a timid hope that Italy, which had so often been at war when the West was tranquil, may enjoy repose now that the rest of the world was in flames. Except this slight hint there is no allusion to his correspondent, <sup>4</sup> to whom

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *F.* IX. 10, and *Var.* 24. Only one other letter from P. to Guido (*Ep. Metr.* III. xxx.) survives, to which I have referred in a Note at the end of Chap. XXXII.; but there are six addressed to Giovanni d'Arezzo.

<sup>2</sup> *Ep. Metr.* I. xii. Rossetti suggests the date 1339, which is certainly probable; for the attack on the Cambrai district in that year was made from the borders of Hainault (see l. 11 quoted just below). But the main events referred to—as the alliance with Germany and the wool-tax granted to Edward at Northampton—belong to the previous year.

<sup>3</sup> The true reading is "Hanonia" (not "Aonia" as in the folios).

<sup>4</sup> The Strozian MS. at Florence gives the addressee as the Chancellor of Mastino, which may be correct. Signora Magrini, however (*op. cit.* pp. 94-95), assumes rather than proves it, and identifies the chancellor with a Messer Niccolo. She strangely fancies that there would be some-

he was personally unknown, and who had just concluded a peace with his powerful enemies in Italy.

In the same year Petrarch appears in close relation with a petty sovereign on his own side of the Alps, for whom the war between the Western Powers constituted a more difficult problem than the poet was willing to acknowledge. This was Humbert II., Dauphin of the Viennois—a semi-independent principality, which had once formed part of the ancient kingdom of Arles, but had been annexed to the Holy Roman Empire, along with Provence, by Conrad II. early in the eleventh century. It had remained a fief of the Empire, but was merely attached to it by the now shadowy tie of feudal service. The encroachments of France upon the states on her eastern border had been so constant that the independence of Dauphiné was now similarly threatened. And when the conflict broke out between Louis of Bavaria, as the ally of England, and Philip VI., it seems that both these powerful neighbours laid claim to the fealty of Humbert. On July 23, 1337, Louis summoned him by letter to appear in arms with his vassals. In the following May Philip sent him a similar summons, alleging a promise made by Humbert's grandfather (Humbert I.) in 1294 to support him in case of war with England. The Dauphin solved the difficulty for the moment by ignoring both citations.<sup>1</sup> But while his more pressing danger lay on the side of France, some historians say <sup>2</sup> that he was tempted by Louis with a promise of the erection of his principality into a kingdom.

We cannot thoroughly appreciate his dilemma without describing the character and fortunes of this young prince, who at the time was only twenty-eight. Humbert de la Tour du Pin had succeeded to his estates at the age of six, and in 1332 married Maria, the daughter of Bertrand del Balzo, brother-in-law of King Robert. The issue of the marriage had been a son, Andrew, who, being dandled by his father on a balcony at two years old, slipped from his grasp and died in consequence of the

thing incongruous in P.'s writing to Mastino personally, which *F.* III. 10 and 11 (to the Dauphin and the lord of Mantua) sufficiently disprove.

<sup>1</sup> Two letters of his to Philip are extant—of November 14, 1338, and March 17, 1339—full of empty protestations of fealty (A. Milliat, *Pétrarque, ses rapports avec Humbert II. et les Chartreux* in *Bulletin de l'Académie delphinale*, Ser. IV. t. 19, pp. 195-235, 1906).

<sup>2</sup> De Sade, I. 370, who quotes Barre, *Histoire d'Allemagne*, V. 679.



fall. Humbert's mother had been Beatrice, sister of Carobert, King of Hungary, and niece of Robert, so that he was intimately related to the royal families of both Naples and Hungary. He was a feeble and effeminate prince, of a devout temper and much addicted to mystical contemplation. The latter qualities made him a special favourite of Pope Benedict, who spent much time with him at the Papal chateau of Pont-sur-Sorgues,<sup>1</sup> and finally allowed him to occupy it, besides assigning him a residence at Avignon in 1336. His luxurious style of living is shown by the fact that in 1347 he had a suite of 105 persons in immediate attendance.<sup>2</sup>

After much "sitting on the fence" he unwillingly proceeded to Paris in July, 1339,<sup>3</sup> at the pressing instance of Philip; and the chronicler, Albert of Strasburg,<sup>4</sup> has left us an amusing account of the interview. On his approaching the royal apartments he was accosted by a knight—no doubt detailed for the purpose—who entreated him in a whisper to agree to the coming proposals, or he would be kept a perpetual prisoner. When he entered the "presence," he found the King surrounded by his council, and was at once informed that he must accept an annual pension and become Philip's vassal. He expressed his lively gratitude for such bounty, and promised full compliance. The King remarked to him in reply, "As you have ceded to me your estates, I require you at once to fortify the city of Vienne." An instrument to that effect was presented to him, which he was compelled to sign on the spot. As soon as he had escaped from Philip's clutches, he protested against the whole proceeding, as the result of violence and fraud; but the Archbishop of Vienne, who was a creature of France and on bad terms with his lord, took measures for its occupation by French troops. Meanwhile Humbert betook himself to his relatives at Naples; and on his return in 1342 found his friend Benedict dead, and the Holy See occupied by Clement VI., a devoted supporter of France.

<sup>1</sup> J. F. André, *Histoire de la Papauté à Avignon*, p. 253.

<sup>2</sup> According to Milliat (*op. cit.*), who quotes U. Chevalier, "Bulletin de la Société Statistique d'Isère," t. vi., these included apothecaries, barbers, farriers, monks, "Maitre Jean" (dwarf) and "Franceschino" (hurdy-gurdy player).

<sup>3</sup> For the date see Fracassetti, *Adnot. in Epist. F.P.* (Fermo, 1890) p. 64.

<sup>4</sup> *Chronicon* (Basel, 1569), p. 189, cited in Valbonnoye, *Hist. de la Dauphiné*.

On February 23, 1343,<sup>1</sup> the Dauphin was compelled to sign a "formal instrument of abdication" at Villeneuve, across the Rhône; but its execution had to be postponed, either because he could not fulfil his declared intention of entering the Dominican order during his wife's life, or because the Emperor Louis, as his lord paramount, refused his consent. He therefore retained the title of Dauphin and a shadow of authority in his dominions for six years longer. In 1343-1344 he conducted a sort of pseudo-crusade on his own account in the Eastern Mediterranean, during which his wife died at Rhodes. But on July 16, 1349, when the last of these obstacles had been removed by the consent of Louis' successor, Charles IV.,<sup>2</sup> the cession was formally completed.<sup>3</sup> Clement VI. ordained Humbert sub-deacon, deacon, and priest at the three Christmas masses in 1349, and eight days later consecrated him titular Patriarch of Alexandria. He resided at the Dominican convent at Avignon, constantly begging money and dignities of the Pope, till his death on March 22, 1355.

I should be inclined to date the commencement of Petrarch's acquaintance with the Dauphin in the Lent of 1336, when that prince was one of the galaxy of sovereigns and nobles who then clustered round the King of France in the Papal city.<sup>4</sup> The Dauphin was a prince of considerable culture,<sup>5</sup> and obtained a Bull from the Pope in May, 1339, to found a new University at Grenoble, the second city of his dominions. He apparently took a fancy to our poet and regarded him as an oracle of classical learning. Indeed, the latter goes so far as to describe their intimacy as "friendship" in his only extant letter to him. That letter, in which he upbraids his pusillanimity in holding aloof from the war, was probably written in the summer of 1339,<sup>6</sup> just before the Dauphin's fateful visit to Paris. Petrarch either

<sup>1</sup> Milliat (*op. cit.*). Christophe (ii. 95) gives the date April 25, and the place Vincennes, which is far less likely.

<sup>2</sup> Hallam, *Middle Ages* (cr. 8vo. ed.), I. 101, n.

<sup>3</sup> At the first cession the beneficiary was Robert, Philip's second son, and Dauphiné was not to be attached to the French crown; at the second it was to be vested in the eldest son of the King, who was henceforward for nearly 500 years to be called "Le Dauphin."

<sup>4</sup> See Vol. I. p. 404.

<sup>5</sup> Albert of Strasburg (p. 130) calls him "bene litteratus."

<sup>6</sup> So Fracassetti decides—in my opinion rightly (*It. i.* 432)—but de Sade apparently places it in 1338.

did not understand, or chose to ignore, the feudal dilemma in which the Prince was placed. He assumes that Humbert was bound to support Philip, whom he inaccurately calls "his King"; and he uses a freedom of expostulation, which a high-spirited Prince would justly resent. While the letter is too long for complete quotation, a brief review of its contents will serve to illustrate Petrarch's attitude towards the war. Some have supposed that Cardinal Colonna, who probably shared the prejudices of ecclesiastics against the "Bavarian," prompted him to write; but the poet himself says it is "faith and charity" which compel him to break silence. He asserts that no contest of equal importance had arisen in Europe for generations. "All kings and peoples, especially those between the Italian Alps and the Ocean, are in arms and await in suspense the issue of so great a struggle. You alone are asleep in all this disturbance." He exhausts his ingenuity in imagining reasons, mostly dishonourable, for his correspondent's abstention. Petrarch had thought him eager for glory and honour; yet he sees him feasting and clothed in soft raiment, surrounded by a crowd of women, instead of taking, like other men, his shield and helm under the summer sun. He almost assumes that the Prince is influenced by the fear of death, and in his usual fashion accumulates classical instances to prove either that death in war is glorious, or that many ancient heroes would have been happier, if they had died sooner. Whether we like it or not, death is always treading upon our heels; "more people," he says, "are killed by dinners than by the sword." He is more interesting when he tries to show that, for a Prince in Humbert's position, neutrality is impossible.

"You see the vast weight of preparations, made by so many kings and peoples, ready to overbalance on whichever side fortune may incline. You have no chance to dissimulate; your enemies are wide awake and frequent the King's levées. If he comes off conqueror, what will be the disposition towards you of him, who, whether you know it or not, has long been your enemy, when he sees you sleeping in his so dire peril? But if the event should be otherwise, are you reckoning on security from the victors in the flush of their success through your present attitude? Your neutrality will be thought the effect of fear rather than of goodwill, and you will be involved in the general ruin. Credit me, both sides will call you a mere spectator,



ready to follow the nod of fortune and the behest of the victor ; so you will find favour nowhere, peril everywhere. Repose, while the world totters, is more like death than sleep."

It is rather surprising at the opening of the contest to find Petrarch posing as a partisan of France ; and these opinions, though doubtless sincere, merely reflect those of his clerical entourage. They seem to have been inspired by the Avignon hatred of "the Bavarian" ; for in the twelfth Eclogue, which was written seven years later <sup>1</sup> (when the Emperor had retired from the contest), he is much more impartial as between France and England. The French kings (except John, who showed him personal kindness), as the authors of the Babylonish captivity of the Papacy, lay altogether outside his sympathy.

One more fact emerges as to the relations between the Dauphin and the poet. It has been assumed with the highest probability that "the person of far greater fortune than prudence" with whom Petrarch went on a pilgrimage about this time, was the Dauphin Humbert. Petrarch describes this excursion in one of his latest letters to <sup>2</sup> Philippe de Cabassoles (then a Cardinal). It was to a cave called "La Sainte Baume," <sup>3</sup> nine miles from St. Maximin in the direction of Marseilles, which was the legendary scene of the lifelong penitence of Saint Mary Magdalene.<sup>4</sup> I should place the expedition in the Lent of 1339, though it may have taken place a year sooner.<sup>5</sup> It probably preceded rather than followed the letter above quoted ; for Petrarch only consented to take part in it at the repeated instance

<sup>1</sup> Except the last nine lines, which were evidently written after the battle of Poitiers. The Eclogues (or rather some of them) were written at Vaucluse in the summer of 1346. For the difference of tone in ll. 152-160, see Chap. XXXII.

<sup>2</sup> *Sen.* XV. 15 (Frac.), written in the summer of 1372.

<sup>3</sup> This signifies in the Languedoc, "The Holy Cave."

<sup>4</sup> P., like most mediæval interpreters of Scripture, follows Gregory the Great in identifying Mary Magdalene with Mary of Bethany (*Vit. Sol.* II. v. 1). The Western legend was that Lazarus, Martha, and Mary came by boat as missionaries to Marseilles, where Lazarus was the first Bishop. Mary retired to the cave and lived there thirty years, miraculously fed by angels.

<sup>5</sup> M. Cochin (p. 53), following de Sade and Fracassetti, would place it in 1338 on the authority of *Sen.* XV, 15 (Frac.), which says it was thirty-four years before. But P. reckoned his years in the Jewish fashion, although it would be "the thirty-fourth year," if the journey took place in Lent. In the Lent of 1338 he would not have had time to contract so great an intimacy (he calls it "familiaritas") with the Bishop of Cavaillon,

of Humbert and Cardinal Colonna, and the letter was scarcely calculated to prolong his intimacy with the Prince.

The "Holy Cave" is situated in a wooded and mountainous district; and the height on which it lies is crowned by a convent of Dominicans—the order to which Humbert was afterwards admitted. The penance chosen by the illustrious penitent was a stay of three days and three nights in the cave, which Petrarch describes as exciting awe and veneration.<sup>1</sup> He was not attracted by the other members of the suite; so he wandered alone in the vast forest, which still surrounds the mountain. But he was apparently expected to share in the orisons of his companion, which may have consisted in a recitation of "the Hours," punctuated by long intervals of silence. To relieve the tedium of the long vigil he resorted to his habit of imaginary converse with his absent friends; and he fancied that Bishop Philippe<sup>2</sup> exhorted him to compose a prayer to the saint in 36 Latin hexameters. It was this production, which his old friend requested him by special messenger to send him in 1372—more than a generation later. No doubt he had originally intended it as a present to the Bishop and had read it to him, but reserved it for a revision which he had never found time to give. He therefore sent him the first draft in its torn and dirty state as a specimen of his youthful labours, purposely making no changes in it, though he admits he might have done so with advantage. As may be expected from the circumstances of their composition, the lines are of very moderate merit; and the folio editions have obscured their meaning by serious errors<sup>3</sup> and faulty punctuation.

Most of his recent biographers have<sup>4</sup> unwarrantably assumed

<sup>1</sup> "Horrendum specus" (*Sen.* XV. 15). "Locus . . . quodum honore venerandus" (*Vit. Sol. loc. cit.*).

<sup>2</sup> He says that the Bishop was specially devoted to this saint; he wrote a Latin life of her, which still exists in MS. in the Library at Paris (H. Cochin, *Le Frère de P.* p. 53).

<sup>3</sup> Rossetti's emendations scarcely touch the difficulty in ll. 21-24. I read:

"Te quoque, digressus terris et ad astra reversus  
Bis tria lustra *hic, non vitam* mortalis agentem  
Rupe sub hac *aluit* (for aliud), tam longo in tempore solis  
Divinis contentam epulis et rore salubri."

<sup>4</sup> So Mr. Hollway-Calthrop (p. 88) and Mrs. Jerrold (p. 56), following de Sade and Fracassetti. M. Cochin (*op. cit.* p. 52) was the first to throw just suspicion on this mistaken interpretation,

that his brother Gherardo accompanied him on this expedition. But in the letter last mentioned Francesco distinctly implies that none of his friends were with him and that he was thrown entirely upon his own resources. It is true that in a letter of much earlier date<sup>1</sup> to Gherardo he says that his brother was confirmed in his resolution to adopt the monastic life by a pilgrimage to the "Holy Cave." Yet there is nothing in that letter or in any other to identify the latter pilgrimage with the former. "La Sainte Baume" was a favourite resort for mediæval devotees, and the poet himself says—perhaps with some exaggeration—that he had visited it "often."<sup>2</sup> Gherardo did not join the Carthusian Order till 1343,<sup>3</sup> and his resolution made in the cave must have been somewhat weak, if it admitted of a delay of three or four years. The brothers may have gone there together after Francesco's return from Italy in 1342; but there is really nothing to show that the latter was with Gherardo in this later pilgrimage,<sup>4</sup> though his presence would be natural enough. He says that the "Holy Cave" is "near"<sup>5</sup> the monastery of Montrieux which his brother eventually joined. The statement affords proof that he had never journeyed from the one place to the other, for the distance is about thirteen miles<sup>6</sup> over rough and difficult country. The project was no doubt taking shape in Gherardo's mind for a long time before he carried it into effect.<sup>7</sup> He fully discussed the matter with his brother, as his only relative by blood with whom he had always lived in perfect harmony, before taking the final step. That discussion may have begun before 1339; but the decisive moment came on his own visit to La Sainte Baume, which it is natural to date at a time much nearer to his actual profession.

<sup>1</sup> *F. X.* 4 (of December, 1349).

<sup>2</sup> *Vit. Sol.* (*loc. cit.*).

<sup>3</sup> See below, Chap. XV.

<sup>4</sup> Here I differ from M. Cochin, whose view rests merely on hypothesis.

<sup>5</sup> "Vicinium," *F. X.* 4.

<sup>6</sup> A Carthusian "Brother" at Montrieux told me in 1898 that the distance was "vingt kilometres." De Sade (t. I. 376) gives it as "deux lieues," which according to this should be "quatre" or "cinq."

<sup>7</sup> M. Cochin (p. 56) interprets the expression "cor lubricum" in *F. X.* 4, as meaning that Gherardo hesitated long.



## LETTER <sup>1</sup>

Part of *F.* VI. 3.

*To Giovanni Colonna di San Vito*

### AN IMAGINARY VOYAGE TO VAUCLUSE

" . . . More noble and more worthy of your kindness is that lament of yours, in which you very sweetly desire my presence and society, and bewail the loss of that in which you say you took special pleasure, just at the time when you were greatly enjoying it. And yet this is of no moment. If you are a friend—nay, a father, for you have proved yourself such by your extreme love and fatherly affection—neither space nor time will bereave you of me. Place me on the topmost peak of Atlas, hardened by Medusa's eyes, and set yourself on the crag of Caucasus, where the bound Prometheus complains of Jove, we will sit and walk and sup together, we will chat together on serious topics. Nothing shall ever prevent our neighbourly intercourse. Love has wings; he crosses not land only, but sky and sea; he knows no impediment of gout or fetters, but in perfect freedom, though fortune obstruct him, he goes where he will. . . .

" Hold me, then, in possession, as I hold you. I pass no day or night, I neither travel nor rest, without you. I cannot deny that a kind of sweetness and pleasure attaches to the actual presence of friends, so long as you concede to me that the memory of them is often sweeter, and that their presence (unwillingly I say it) often has its perils. So if perchance you think my presence may be a benefit and comfort to your life, there are two ways of securing this. On my side I do not reject the idea (which is beyond your hope) of paying you a visit at

<sup>1</sup> I translate only the last three pages of a letter which extends to twenty. It is a reply to a peevish letter from his correspondent (now a Franciscan friar, see Vol. I. pp. 301, 452) in which he complains of old age, poverty, and gout. P. strives to prove, with his usual wealth of examples, that none of these things are evils—at least to his aged friend. The letter is in a gentler tone than *F.* III. 13 (already quoted, Vol. I. pp. 451-453). I feel sure that these letters to San Vito (*F.* VI. 2-4) are out of their proper order and that this was written in 1339 or 1340. See below, Chap. XIX. p. 361, n. 3 (on p. 360).

the summer resort of the poet Horace,<sup>1</sup> and of remaining long enough to satisfy your desire. Or if you prefer to visit me (for the human mind generally enjoys more whatever it has gained by toil), I will plan a route for you, on which you will not be delayed by the impediment in your feet, nor even need put them to the ground. By the hands of your servants you will be carried to the Anio, which glides past the walls of Tivoli. There, when laid on a skiff, you will go downstream till the Tiber meets you on the right. Hence on its broader bosom you will pass the walls of Rome herself and reach the sea. Again turning to the right but committed to a stouter vessel, you will traverse the gulfs of the Tyrrhene sea till on the right again, leaving Marseilles far behind, you sail on a river bark up the mouth of the Rhône, where first on its marshy pools and stony plain lies ancient Arles, soon on its beetling rock sits gloomy Avignon, which the Roman Pontiff is now striving to make the world's capital, deserting his own see—in my opinion contrary to nature—and forgetful of the Lateran and of Silvester.<sup>2</sup> Then, always upstream, you will proceed three miles or a little more till you meet a silvery affluent; turn up it to the right. The Sorgues is the most placid of rivers; and after breasting its waters for about fifteen miles, you will see the source of the bright stream—a fount that is second to none—and a very high cliff overhanging its spring, so that you can go no further, nor need you. For as all has been so far 'right' and favourable, there, when you have disembarked, you will see me on your right.

"Where can I be more quiet at a distance from Italy? You will see me content with poor but shady gardens and with a tiny lodging—too small, you may think, to contain so great a guest. You will see the man you so much miss in good health, in want of nothing, with no high expectations from Fortune. From morn till eve he roams over the grass, the hills, the streams, the woods, the open country; he flees men's haunts, follows trackless ways,<sup>3</sup> rejoices in shade, in dripping caves, in green meadows, detests the worries of the Curia, shuns the din of cities and the thresholds of the proud; himself equally removed from joy and grief, he smiles at the pursuits of the vulgar. Night and day he is at leisure, glorying in the Muses' company, in the songs of birds, in the murmur of the water. He is attended by few servants, but many books; sometimes he stays at home, but anon he lingers by the prattling stream and rests his weary head and limbs on the grass; and—no small part of his solace—

<sup>1</sup> *Odes*, I. vii. 10–13; Suetonius, *Vit. Hor. ad fin.*

<sup>2</sup> P. may be alluding here to the fabled "Donation" of Rome by Constantine to Silvester I., Bishop of Rome 314–336.

<sup>3</sup> It is amazing to find the learned Fracassetti (*It.* ii. 139) translating "avia sectantem" by "inseguire gli uccelli"!

very rarely does a soul come near him who can divine a thousandth part of his concerns. You may watch him now standing with abstracted gaze, now talking a good deal to himself—in fine, disdaining himself and all things mortal. There, father, in the act of inviting you, I have rendered needless the toil of your coming. For if you read this through and trust my story, you have a complete view of me. So much do we seem to be talking together that I have forgotten I was writing a letter.

*“Fount of the Sorgues, May 30.”*



## CHAPTER XIV

### THE CROWNING OF THE POET (1339-1341)

ROBERT OF ANJOU, King of Naples and Jerusalem,<sup>1</sup> has been frequently mentioned in former chapters as by the tradition of his family the leader of the Guelfs in Italy and the devoted supporter of Papal policy in that country. We have now to view him in a new rôle—as the royal patron of our poet (by long residence his subject), as the “Sage,” to whose learning and wisdom was left the final decision as to Petrarch’s fitness for supreme honour.

The King was now over sixty years of age, and his dreams of dominating the peninsula and even of reconquering Sicily had been chastened by time and experience. His influence in Rome, and indeed throughout Italy, was still considerable; but though his good fortune had saved his realm from the attacks of two successive Emperors, his warlike achievements had never been more than moderate. There was even less foundation for the exalted estimate formed by his own contemporaries of his intellectual gifts; and his surname of “The Wise” was chiefly due to a certain prudence in policy and to the interest, perhaps not very intelligent, which he showed in abstruse subjects. Petrarch, who “never speaks of him without hyperbole,”<sup>2</sup> styles him “a second Plato in intellect”<sup>3</sup>—a comparison so absurd as to be excused only by the poet’s ignorance of the philosopher and by his warm gratitude for Robert’s past favours. But this eulogy

<sup>1</sup> This empty title—it was nothing more—had been purchased in the latter part of the thirteenth century by Charles of Anjou from Mary of Antioch, a descendant of Amaury (one of the Latin Kings of Jerusalem) for a yearly payment of 4,000 “livres tournois.” In 1279 Charles had taken as his second wife Margaret, granddaughter of John de Brienne, the last “Latin King”; but this match could not affect his title, as his successors were not her offspring (R. E. Conder, *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 1897, p. 396).

<sup>2</sup> Zumbini (*op. cit.* ed. 1895), p. 79.

<sup>3</sup> F. V. 1 (to Barbato), of May 28, 1343.

does not stand alone. Boccaccio, who knew the King well, though he owed little to his patronage, describes him as the most learned King since Solomon.<sup>1</sup> And even Giovanni Villani, who was no lover of his House, speaks of him as the wisest monarch in Christendom for five hundred years—that is, since the days of Charlemagne.

Posterity has found it difficult to account for these extravagant encomiums. In the next century the historian Flavio Biondo of Forli says that in his day even a learned man would scarcely have heard of Robert, if Petrarch had not spoken of him so often and so kindly.<sup>2</sup> It is therefore clear that the King's reputation was but ephemeral, and that he owed it not to his own intellectual eminence but to his encouragement of learning in others. In the passage above quoted Boccaccio tells us, on the authority of an old courtier, that Robert in his boyhood was of so dull and sluggish a temper that both his father and his instructors despaired of his future; and it was not till a spark was kindled in his mind by the fables of Æsop that he made any marked progress. His favourite study on attaining manhood was the application of the philosophy of the Schoolmen to theology; and he himself in 1316 composed a treatise on the Moral Virtues, which appears to be merely a collection of apophthegms<sup>3</sup> for the guidance of the young. He was fond of writing sermons, and doubtless, if he did not preach them himself, he caused them to be preached by others. Some of these are extant; and their most marked characteristic is their pedantic formality, unrelieved by any warmth of sentiment or diction.<sup>4</sup> To this predilection Dante makes the King's brother, Carlo Martello, allude sarcastically in his remarks in the Heaven of Venus,

" So on the throne ye bid him sit  
Whom nature made for pulpit fit."

*Par.* VIII. 147 (Shadwell's translation).

Politically, of course, Dante recognized Robert as his mortal foe; and about the time when he was writing these lines he

<sup>1</sup> *De Geneal. Deor.* XIV. 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Italia Illustrata*, p. 416 (in Basel ed. 1531).

<sup>3</sup> They are 111 in number, and were printed by Ubaldini in 1642, with the extracts from P.'s autograph MS. of the Canzoniere. According to Siragusa (*L'Ingegno, il sapere e gli intendimenti di Roberto d'Angio*, Palermo, 1891) they were translated into Italian verse by a later hand.

<sup>4</sup> Siragusa (*op. cit.*), p. 50.

composed the eclogues to Del Virgilio in which he expresses his fear of coming to Bologna to receive the laurel crown, because that Guelf city was "the cave of the jealous Polyphemus."<sup>1</sup> There were others in Italy who shared the view that this "pulpiteer" was more suited to be a monk than a King.<sup>2</sup>

But Robert's reputation as a sage did not rest entirely on his theological bent. He was content to learn as well as to teach. He was a great supporter of the University of Naples, forbidding the civil law to be taught at any other place in his realm. He often himself attended the lectures, standing throughout their delivery.<sup>3</sup> He was a diligent collector of books, and appointed a man of real learning, Paolo di Perugia, to the charge of his library at the salary—princely for those days—of 225 gold florins a year. Robert employed copyists of Arabic and Greek manuscripts and caused works of Aristotle and Galen to be translated into Latin. Moreover, though accused by his enemies of avarice, he strove to promote learning by inviting scholars to his court and acting as their patron. So far as possible, he chose his officers and advisers from men of this stamp; and his chief minister, Bartolomeo da Capua, was an eminent jurist, who, like his master, had a weakness for sermonizing. The King chose a writer of ability, Agostino Trionfo, who may almost be called his publicist, to champion the cause of the Papacy against the Empire.<sup>4</sup> In view of Petrarch's boyish intention at Bologna to seek Robert's patronage,<sup>5</sup> it is curious that the subject for which he did least was the revival of poetry and classical literature. Here, perhaps, we have a reason for the rapid extinction of his contemporary reputation. He remained a Schoolman to the last; and though his relations with Petrarch brought him, as it were, to the portal of the Temple of Humanism, he can scarcely be said to have entered it. He was, however, accessible to

<sup>1</sup> In his *Ecl.* II. 44–81 (written about 1320) "Polyphemus" is Robert, whose representative at Bologna about this time was the Orbietan "vicar," who at Florence in 1315 had condemned Dante to decapitation, if he fell into the hands of the Commune. A band of Ghibelline exiles had just been cut up in Bolognese territory and their leaders hanged. (See *Dante and Giovanni del Virgilio*, by P. H. Wicksteed and E. G. Gardner, 1902, pp. 226, 227.)

<sup>2</sup> This is the remark of the commentator of the Monte Cassino Codex of the *Commedia* on this passage.

<sup>3</sup> M. Murena, *Vita di Roberto, Re di Napoli* (Naples, 1770).

<sup>4</sup> For an account of his treatise *De Potestate Ecclesiastica*, see R. L. Poole, *Illustrations of Mediæval Thought*, pp. 253–255.

<sup>5</sup> *F. I.* I.



emancipating influences which insensibly modified his theological attitude. He was in constant political touch with the new and throbbing life of Florence; by his Neapolitan residence he was the heir of the free speculation of the Arabian Averröes, whose works he helped to diffuse without understanding their tendency; and in flat defiance of Pope John, he defended, as we have seen, the persecuted branch of the Franciscan Order.

The Middle Age is full of seeming contradictions, which disappear on a closer acquaintance with the facts. It was, perhaps, this very leaning of Robert towards his tutors, the "Spiritual" Franciscans, which took him out of the rut of scholastic theology and laid him open to influences of a widely different kind. That branch of the great Order produced (see Vol. I. p. 378), without any conscious heterodoxy, the most daring speculations of the day. And it was in Naples, which under Frederick II. had been the home of the Arabian philosophy—perhaps in his time of positive scepticism—that the influence of "the Spirituals" became most powerful. A sharp distinction was drawn, both here and at Paris, between Averröes, the free-thinker, the derider of the Christian Faith, and Averröes, the commentator on Aristotle, who, heathen though he were, was "the Master of those who know."<sup>1</sup> This is the best explanation of the curious fact that Robert, the devout son of the Church, the scholastic theologian, the edifying preacher, became also the patron of Arabian and Hebrew learning, the fosterer of alchemy and empirical medicine, the devotee of judicial astrology.

The last so-called "science," in spite of ecclesiastical prohibition, had its votaries at the Papal Court—even, it is said, among the Cardinals themselves.<sup>2</sup> The truth is that in those days men universally believed in the influence of the stars upon the fortunes of individuals and of nations. Even the enlightened Roger Bacon accepted such influence as a fact, though he denied that it could affect the human will.<sup>3</sup> The novelty introduced by

<sup>1</sup> *Inf.* IV. 131. See Renan, *Averröes et l'Averroïsme* (Paris, 1866), pp. 259-267, who notes the influence of the Arabs on Alexander Hales and Roger Bacon.

<sup>2</sup> St. C. Baddeley, *Robert the Wise and his Heirs*, 1897, pp. 222, 223; see also pp. 273-275. I am much indebted to the sketch given of King Robert in this work; but the writer does not account for the mixture of Scholasticism, Averroïsism and Franciscanism at Naples, which he strangely calls "the mysterious brew of an intellectual twilight."

<sup>3</sup> Bacon was a Franciscan, though he died before the "Spiritual"

the Arabian philosophers into Southern Europe was the practice of divining the future, as an occult—almost as a magical—art ; and it was this which was denounced by the Inquisition as impious, as we have seen in the case of Cecco d'Ascoli. The astrologer had to walk warily if he were to escape the repute of a magician ; and more licence was no doubt permitted to illustrious dabblers in the art than to their humbler brethren. Petrarch's confessor, the friar Dionisio Roberti, is said to have gained fame by an exact prediction of the death of the Ghibelline general Castruccio ; and though an interval of ten years had elapsed, this circumstance may account for his invitation to Naples by Robert in 1338. The King is said never to have launched any of his luckless Sicilian expeditions without consulting his astrologers<sup>1</sup> ; and he probably desired Dionisio's help in forecasting the issue of the great war in the West. Their joint investigation of the secrets of the heavens convinced them that the King of France would be wise not to engage the enemy, if commanded by Edward III. in person. Robert, therefore, did his utmost, without success, to arrange a peace between these monarchs.

Meanwhile the Tuscan friar, now a Bishop and basking in the favour of his new sovereign, had not forgotten the humble hermit of Vacluse and his eager desire for Robert's patronage. As we shall shortly see, the poet must have confided to his friend not merely his anxiety for a personal introduction, but the dearest wish of his heart—to obtain the laurel crown of poetry through the influence of the learned King. But Dionisio, himself a keen student of the classics, would soon become aware of the royal limitations in that branch of study ; and he prudently began merely by commending Petrarch to Robert as a graceful Latin poet and by showing him the adroit panegyric quoted in the last chapter. The King rose to the bait, and announced his intention of writing to Petrarch and submitting to his judgment an epitaph of his own composition on his niece Clemenza, the

controversy became acute. Dr. Whewell (*History of the Inductive Sciences*, I. p. 224) is perhaps right in connecting astrology with mysticism, which would explain its attraction for the "Spiritual" Franciscans.

<sup>1</sup> Probably Andalò di Negro and "Paolo the geometer," both alluded to as such by Boccaccio. The former could hardly have been (as Baddeley suggests, p. 223), an astrological pupil of Dionisio, for he was then a very old man (Hortis, *Op. Lat. di Boccaccio*, p. 263).

widowed Queen of France, who had died at Paris in October, 1328. This lady, whom Petrarch had mentioned in his verses, had spent the greater part of her widowhood with her uncle, who was much attached to her; she was of a gentle, courteous disposition, and is warmly praised both by Villani and by French writers.

This letter of Robert and Petrarch's reply <sup>1</sup> are both dated by Fracassetti in 1338, but in my opinion on insufficient grounds <sup>2</sup>; de Sade's date of 1339 is much to be preferred. We do not know the exact date of Dionisio's arrival at Naples; but there is evidence that he spent some time at Florence on his way, and he probably did not reach the King till the early months of 1339, just before his advancement to the episcopate. We may imagine Petrarch's delight at receiving the King's letter from the tone of his reply; we need not wonder that he has not preserved the royal missive with its enclosed epitaph. He must have been aware that he had "laid on the paint" of flattery with too thick a brush for him to permit posterity to challenge his judgment. It would be almost too cruel to translate the whole letter; but these are its opening sentences, written on December 26, 1339:

<sup>1</sup> *F. IV. 3.*

<sup>2</sup> His conclusion rests entirely on two premises—(1) That what is assumed to be an earlier letter (*F. III. 7*) was also addressed to Dionisio; and (2) that both this and *F. IV. 2* must have been written before March, 1339 (when D. was made a Bishop), because P. does not call him "pater," a term which he always applies to bishops. It is curious that in *F. IV. 1* (the Ventoux letter of 1336) P. *does* call him "pater" (probably as his confessor), though he writes three years before D.'s appointment. The friend in *F. III. 7* is addressed as "amice," which should have warned Fracassetti that it was not written to D. at all. (In *F. IV. 2* the correspondent is not "addressed," though he is alluded to as "Dionysius noster." In this report of a conversation with his friends (not with D.) before his advancement, P. of course gives the words then used.) I agree with Fracassetti that *F. III. 7* is out of its proper order, and that neither the folio address to Caloria, nor that of the Paris MS. to Paganino of Milan suit its contents. It seems to be written to a state officer of Robert (not so intimate with P. as D.) at the time when the King was preparing a military expedition. This would suit the late summer of 1342, when he invaded Sicily in consequence of the death of King Peter. In that case I conjecture that the correspondent was Giovanni Barili, with whom P. had already formed a friendship. *F. IV. 2* alludes to several events before March, 1339, but not necessarily as recent occurrences. Such is the (probable) allusion to the disturbance caused at Florence by the news of Venice's separate peace with Mastino on December 8, 1338 ("Tuscarum fragor rerum"), which Fracassetti does not explain at all, and which evidently took place while D. was still at Florence (see below). The allusion in the same letter to P.'s determination to go to Naples would come far more naturally in January, 1340, than in January, 1339, when it seems likely that D. had not yet reached Naples,



“ A flash of unwonted brilliance has dazzled my eyes. Happy the pen that can transmit such words ! Which am I to admire most—the superb brevity, or the majesty of the sentiments, or the divine beauty of their expression ? Never, illustrious king, could I have credited that so great a matter could be treated in so succinct, so weighty, so polished a manner ; I did not look for anything of the kind from human powers. To show your empire over men’s hearts—an object striven for by every famous orator—you have stimulated the reader’s mind to such sympathy that he can follow you with marvellous ease in every part of your discourse.”

As illustrating this point, he says human misery had been so touchingly described that he “ wished he had never been born ” ; then his drooping spirit had been sustained by such hope of immortality that he “ rejoiced at this mortal state.” Here the courtly poet indulges in an erudite digression, tracing this hope in pre-Christian times from Pherecydes through Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato to Cicero and Cato ; but he at once humbly craves pardon for mentioning such things to the king of philosophers. The eagerness with which he had embraced “ the royal dogma ” had led him to call witnesses in its support. He considered the lot of Queen Clemenza, in spite of her untimely death, as supremely enviable ; for, in exchange for our uncertain life, she has attained—if he may so put it—to “ two immortalities, one of which she owes to the heavenly, the other to the earthly king—the former to Christ, the latter to Robert.” The value of any gift depends much on the personality of the giver ; henceforth her name will live in conjunction with those of Robert and of the most renowned men of her age. Many will think that such a panegyric makes full amends for her early death, and will call her, as Alexander called Achilles, fortunate indeed in finding such a herald of her virtue. He concludes with a prayer that Heaven may continue to bless His Serene Highness, adorned “ as he is with the twin laurels of warfare and of study.”

Here was a fairly broad hint ; and had the King been as skilled in reading the motives of men as in studying their opinions, he would have found “ the sting of the letter in its tail.” I do not mean, of course, that Robert in his exalted station would understand the expression as more than a metaphor. But the custom of sovereigns and cities granting to poets the honour of wearing the laurel had, as we shall see, been recently revived ; and Petrarch

may well have been aware that in this very year the King had bestowed the distinction upon his old master, Convenevole, probably as a reward for some adulatory verses.<sup>1</sup> The letter, notwithstanding its gross flattery, is written in the poet's best Latin; he was clearly trying to show his sovereign that he could write as well in prose as in poetry.

Nine days later—on January 4, 1340—he returns to the charge in a letter to his faithful intermediary, which he could trust him to show to the King.<sup>2</sup>

“No sweeter news” he says, “has reached my ears, since they heard your voice, than that you have gone to Robert on his invitation.” He proves the point by a long exordium on the elements of a really happy life, which consists chiefly, as he contends, in virtue and mental repose, to which the main contributory cause is intercourse with able and illustrious men. “You take my meaning, I am sure; but I will speak more clearly. Who in Greece, says Cicero, was more illustrious than Themistocles? I add with the utmost confidence, ‘Who in Italy—nay in Europe—is more illustrious than Robert?’ I admire, however, not his diadem, but his character, not his kingship, but his disposition.” He only is a King, who has learnt to govern himself; many who are so-called are more savage than the beasts, and scarcely bear a human semblance. To be really a King is a great matter; to have the title is insignificant. True kings carry the source of their veneration within themselves, though all their court and insignia were removed.

“Robert is a true King and rightly famous; for his extraordinary patience and moderation show the empire that he has over himself. How wide his sway is over others is manifest by the varied character of his subjects, and his widely extended realm.”

After quoting Seneca on the true king, he continues:

“To him then you have gone on his own invitation; the conformity of your studies to his accounts both for his call and for your acceptance; and if I were writing to anyone else, I should say how great a solace he has gained in his troubles. As

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. I. p. 90.

<sup>2</sup> *F.* IV, 2,

for yourself, you could have no shorter road to that internal peace, of which, as you often complained, the din of Tuscan events <sup>1</sup> had deprived you. So I congratulate your prudence or good luck, and repeat with still greater confidence the words which I used at first. For when I had it first from report and afterwards from your own letter that you had left Florence and gone to Naples, I said to myself and my friends, 'Our Dionisio is making for tranquillity at a great pace and has taken the right road to a happy life.' As to me, be sure of this, that I shall soon follow you. For you know my purpose about the laurel—how I have resolved to owe it to no mortal but the King of whom I speak. If I get the honour of an invitation, all will be well. If not, I shall pretend that I have heard something; or, as if I were in doubt as to the meaning of the letter which he has sent with the most friendly condescension to me (though personally unknown), I shall interpret it as conveying the implication that I am invited. To the royal composition I have sent a sort of plebeian reply, in what they call 'a far lower strain' and struck with amazement at his brilliance.

"January 4. *At the fount of the Sorgues.*"

At this point there is a gap of at least eight months <sup>2</sup> in the published correspondence. But it is impossible to suppose that there were no more letters on the subject. Petrarch remained at Vaucluse with occasional visits to Avignon, on one of which he may have said a last farewell to the Bishop of Lombez, who returned to his diocese in 1340 after a seven years' absence in Italy. The exact date of his return is unknown <sup>3</sup>; but it was probably in the July or August of this year. I cannot but think that the Bishop had much to do with the offer of the laurel crown from the Roman senate, which reached the poet on September 1. We are nowhere distinctly informed that he owed that honour to the King of Naples <sup>4</sup>; and the influence of the latter in the

<sup>1</sup> See n. 2, p. 109 above.

<sup>2</sup> Fracassetti (see the same note) would make it twenty months, which seems far too long a time.

<sup>3</sup> P. says in his letter of condolence to the Cardinal (*F. IV. 12*) that the Bishop lived "scarcely a year" after his return to Lombez. De Sade (*II. 29, n.*) proves from the Papal Register that permission to make his will was given towards the end of August, 1341, and that his successor was appointed on October 1.

<sup>4</sup> According to Mr. Robinson (*op. cit.* p. 102, n.) P. confessed that he owed the honour to Robert. If he means by "the honour" the offer of the crown (which perhaps he does not, see p. 103), I should dispute his statement. The passage he quotes (*Ecl. X. 371, 372*) refers of course to the King's decision that he was worthy of the laurel.



Eternal City had greatly waned since the establishment there of the new régime under Benedict XII.<sup>1</sup> One of the existing (or incoming)<sup>2</sup> Senators at the time of the invitation was Count Orso of Anguillara, the Bishop's brother-in-law and Petrarch's host of 1337. In the letter quoted below<sup>3</sup> Petrarch says nothing of his indebtedness to the Bishop for the honour; but quite probably the latter did not wish his friend to know that he had had a hand in it, and so allowed him to suppose that the offer was spontaneous—a hypothesis much more gratifying to his vanity.

If we follow the account in the *Epistle to Posterity* (written many years later) we might conclude, as some have done,<sup>4</sup> that the double offer of the crown came upon Petrarch unexpectedly. But the letter to Dionisio just quoted is altogether against this view. The friar-bishop may have advised Petrarch not to come to Naples, as he found Robert apathetic in the matter; and to soothe his disappointment, he may have recommended him to write to their common friend, Roberto dei Bardi, now Chancellor of the University of Paris, and submit to him a specimen of the *Africa*<sup>5</sup>; while he himself wrote to the same dignitary—his old colleague—to suggest the ceremony of public crowning. We cannot suppose that either offer was spontaneous; for the ceremony had not taken place at Rome since the old Empire, and was unheard of in the North. But it is quite

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. I. p. 406.

<sup>2</sup> Gregorovius (*op. cit.* VI. pt. i. p. 201, n. 2) says that the two preceding senators "must have" remained in office till September 1, 1340, though the text gives a different impression. This looks as if he had no positive proof of the fact. These senators had been expelled by the popular party, and though the Pope's nuncio restored order in June, he may have considered it inexpedient to reinstate them. The term of office was generally six months, but it was sometimes extended to a second term; and as Orso and Giordano Orsini were still senators on July 23, 1341, after which they were superseded by others (*v. Gregorovius, loc. cit.*) it looks as if they had been in office a full year to that date.

<sup>3</sup> *F.* IV. 6 (to the Bishop, see pp. 153, 154 below). He there says that he had often discussed the matter with the Bishop.

<sup>4</sup> See Mr. Hollway-Calthrop, p. 93.

<sup>5</sup> To his critic Zoilus (who had asserted that he had never heard of his poems) P. gives in *Ep. Metr.* II. xi. 29-33 a list of those who had read them, and among these he places Roberto dei Bardi first—perhaps because he was the first (as suggested above) to read the *Africa*. P. is only speaking here of Latin poems; for the honour would not have been granted (either in Rome or Paris) on the score of Italian poetry. Besides the *Africa* he had then written only a few metrical letters in Latin, none of which are addressed to Roberto.

likely that an offer from Rome had never entered Petrarch's head.

He has been freely blamed both for his adulation of Robert and for his underhand intriguing to obtain the coveted honour. Flattery of great people for personal ends is a common failing in all ages, and no doubt Petrarch overdid his part; but he scarcely deserves censure for trying to gain a patron of great contemporary fame. Fortune had given him a chance, for which he had longed ever since he left the University; and he was determined not to throw it away. The poet Campbell, who habitually speaks of the subject of his biography with a scarcely veiled sneer, decides <sup>1</sup> that for the sake of their art poets ought to seek the patronage of the great, if the means they use are honest; but he forbears to discuss whether Petrarch complied with this condition. Certainly the claim made by the latter in his *Epistle to Posterity* to independence in his intercourse with the great <sup>2</sup> can scarcely be sustained in the case of Robert; but there is this to be said that after the King's death—when he had no more to gain from him—he always speaks of him in the same extravagant terms. The accusation <sup>3</sup> that he “walked in crooked ways” to get this distinction and thereby “cast a hateful shadow upon the wreath and upon his own character” is harder to meet because of the scanty evidence, but is surely pitched in too high a key. If the object of his desire had been merely the usual and recognized reward of poetic merit, he should have refrained from soliciting it. But in the general debasement of learning there was no real precedent for the kind of honour that he coveted. He had to create one; and this could only be done by pulling the strings behind the scenes. We have his own frank confession in the *Epistle to Posterity* <sup>4</sup> that he was unworthy of the honour and that his mature judgment led him to condemn the verdict of his friends; but this was merely a late repentance born of experience. What appears to me most worthy of censure is the lack of candour, which allowed him in this very document to represent the honour as unsolicited. Here—as so often—the truth leaks out in the *Secret*, which

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Petrarch*, Vol. I. p. 200.

<sup>2</sup> *Frac. I. 3.* See Vol. I. p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> Koerting, p. 161.

<sup>4</sup> *Frac. I. 9.* See Excursus VII. p. 424.

may well be called Petrarch's "Confessions." In that work<sup>1</sup> St. Augustine reminds him that he had undergone "such toil as still makes him shudder" and that he had surmounted "violent obstacles of fortune" in order to gain the poetic crown; the saint also charges him with the incredible foolishness of undergoing all this in order to win a distinction remotely connected with the name of his lady. The last charge is true enough and explains much; had the wreath, as in ancient times, been of ivy or of oak,<sup>2</sup> it would have lost most of its value in Petrarch's eyes. He persuaded himself that he was seeking the glory of his lady no less than his own, and that in such a quest—in love as in war—every expedient not openly dishonourable was fair.

By a remarkable coincidence the two invitations—one from the south-east, the other from the north-west—reached the poet on the same day. Except for the unparalleled honour, which naturally at the moment engrossed his thoughts, the circumstance must have been unwelcome and placed him in a difficulty, especially if the offer to which he was least inclined had been the result of his own solicitation, direct or indirect. On the evening of that day—September 1, 1340<sup>3</sup>—he addressed the following letter<sup>4</sup> to Cardinal Colonna, begging earnestly for advice, though doubtless certain in his own mind what that advice would be.

"I find myself in embarrassment—at the parting of two ways—and I know not which to take. The story is a short one, but passing strange. To-day, about nine o'clock, letters were handed me from the Senate, in which I am invited, very earnestly and with much persuasion, to come to Rome and receive the poetic laurel. On this same day, at four o'clock, a courier reached me with a letter to the same effect from the illustrious Robert, Chancellor of the University of Paris, my fellow-citizen and one most friendly to my fortunes. He adjures me in the most

<sup>1</sup> Dialogue III. (*Opera*, B. ed. p. 403).

<sup>2</sup> Gibbon states (Vol. VIII. ed. Milman and Smith, p. 226, n. 11), following Martial, that it was of oak; Servius, in his note on Virg. *Ecl.* VIII. 13, that it was of ivy. To this passage P. has a note on the margin of his Virgil in the Ambrosian Library, "Sed et laurus" (*P. et l'Hum.* i. 149) and aptly quotes Statius, *Achilleis*, I. 15, 16.

<sup>3</sup> That is, "Kal. Sept.," which is Fracassetti's reading. De Sade gives the date as August 23 ("X Kal. Sept.") on the authority of the "Paris MSS.," but M. Cochin (in *P. e la Lombardia*, 1904) does not give this among the variants of the "Colbertin," the best of these MSS.

<sup>4</sup> *F.* IV. 4.



flattering terms to go to Paris. Who, I pray, could ever have guessed that such a thing would happen among these rocks? And so, because the thing seems almost incredible, I have sent you both letters with their seals attached. One calls me to the east, the other to the west; you will see with what strong arguments I am urged this way and that. I know that human affairs have no stable foundation, and that both in our worries and in our actions we are deluded by shadows. Yet as the youthful mind is more greedy of glory than of virtue<sup>1</sup> (forgive my impertinence in thus boasting to you), why should not I think this glorious for me, since long ago that powerful African King, Syphax, thought it so for him, when he was called into friendship at one and the same time by Rome and Carthage, the two greatest cities of the world? That offer was of course ascribed to the resources of his kingdom, and yet such honour is reserved for me! His suppliants found him resting on a haughty throne amid gold and jewels and surrounded by armed guards; my messengers found me, in the morning roaming alone in the woods, in the evening walking in the meadows by the banks of the Sorgues. He was asked for succour, I am offered a high honour. But since joy is a foe to resolution, I admit that I hesitate and waver in my gladness at the event. I am inclined to the one side by the grace of novelty,<sup>2</sup> to the other by reverence for age; to the one by my friend, to the other by my native land. One thing turns the scale in favour of the latter—that the King of Sicily is in Italy, and him, of all men, I could take with equanimity as the judge of my powers. You see the rising waves of my concern; you, who have not blushed to lay your hand upon the helm, will guide my storm-tossed vessel by your advice.

*"The fount of the Sorgues, Sept. 1st., evening."*

He gives no hint in this letter that he had expected either of these offers; but in the circumstances, and in the first exuberance of his joy, this need cause no surprise. The Cardinal may have been aware, under the seal of secrecy, that the Roman offer was coming; but he probably knew nothing of the negotiations at Paris; and there was no need to enlighten him, if—as we can hardly doubt from the allusion to Robert—Petrarch had already decided for Rome. He tells us<sup>3</sup> that he had sent off

<sup>1</sup> This phrase seems almost to suggest the subject of the fine allegorical Ode, Canz. XII. (which Carducci and Cochin say was written between September, 1340, and February, 1341) according to Tassoni's interpretation of it. See below, Chap. XVI. p. 274.

<sup>2</sup> He means that no laurel crown had as yet been bestowed at Paris.

<sup>3</sup> *Ep. Post.* (Frac. I. 8).

the letter late in the evening ; and the reply was so promptly dispatched that he received it before nine o'clock next day. He acknowledged it as follows <sup>1</sup> :

" I not only accept, but embrace your counsel ; it is splendid, and entirely worthy of your wisdom and kindness. Your partiality to our country does not deter me, for you love the truth still better. I will go where you bid me. Should any marvel at my choice, I will silence them first by my reasons, then by the authority of your name, for authority generally prevails over reason. My only remaining task is to find an excuse for my friend Roberto sufficient to satisfy not only himself—which would be easy enough—but the great University, if the offer should get abroad. But on this I will consult you by word of mouth. I hear that Roberto is coming himself with the intention of dragging me to Paris ; and if this be the case we must act at once. . . . "

There is no sign that the Chancellor carried out his threat ; but the intimation of his purpose must have come by the Parisian messenger in a separate letter (either from himself or some other friend) which Petrarch had not sent to the Cardinal the night before. Roberto's immediate arrival might have complicated matters considerably ; but perhaps the messenger would remain long enough in Avignon to be the bearer of the reply. The poet would need all his consummate tact to extricate himself from the difficulty ; and it is much to be regretted that he has not preserved his reply to either invitation. They would of course be in Latin, as would the documents conveying the offers, and his best skill would certainly be employed in their composition. But in later life Petrarch seems to have been strangely shy of preserving mementos of so great an occasion ; he appears, even in the *Letter to Posterity*, to be more than half ashamed of the ceremony and of his own eagerness to obtain the crown. We have no complete description of it from his own pen <sup>2</sup> ; and the speech which he made on the Capitol has been preserved merely by accident.

This change of view may be attributed chiefly to the effect of time, which inevitably brings disillusion, but partly also to

<sup>1</sup> *F. IV. 5.*

<sup>2</sup> Unless we are to consider as such the thirty-three lines written hastily in the following year (1342) to Giovanni Barili (*Ep. Metr. II. 11. 33-65*, see pp. 138, 139 below). They give us little idea of the scene.

the religious and patristic studies of his later days, which imbued him, at least in some degree, with the mediæval distrust of earthly fame. The first symptom of the latter appears in the third dialogue of his *Secret*,<sup>1</sup> written within three years of his crowning; and it is expressed still more strongly in certain chapters<sup>2</sup> of his treatise on *The Remedies of Both Kinds of Fortune*, written several years later at Milan. The main thesis of his *Trionfi*, which belong to his latest period, is the Triumph of Time over Fame, and the Triumph of Divinity or True Religion over them both. I shall speak later of this gradual revulsion to the mediæval standpoint; but we must not let it blind us to the startling novelty, in Petrarch's own age, of his eager pursuit of earthly glory.<sup>3</sup>

That pursuit, we must remember, was the direct result of the classical studies of his early days. In practice he never forsook it, as he never forsook them; but in theory he showed much wavering, as he gradually came to realize the emptiness of fame. This hesitation was the natural effect of his own age of transition, which makes him so supremely interesting a subject of study. He found in his ancient models a firm belief in the power of earthly survival among men through the works of the intellect and of the plastic arts; and his strong sense of individuality made him grasp at this as the supreme earthly good. In that old pagan world he lived more effectually than in his own; consequently in the sphere of intellect his ambition became a passion as absorbing as his ideal love in the sphere of the emotions. But in the former, instead of a lifelong disappointment, he met with a success beyond his wildest dreams. His achievement in that sphere had no small effect in determining the attitude towards fame of the succeeding age of Humanism. The passion for what Symonds calls<sup>4</sup> "self-effectuation" soon became general; and the shackles of centuries of tutelage—too often also the wholesome restraints of religion—were snapped and thrown to the winds.

<sup>1</sup> See Chap. XVI. (below).

<sup>2</sup> *De Rem. Utr. Fort.*, I. dialogues 44, 92, 117; II. 25, 88, 130.

<sup>3</sup> The whole subject is exhaustively discussed in Prof. O. Elton's essay on Literary Fame in his *Modern Studies* (1907), pp. 47-52. I am much indebted to this able paper; but it is rather unfortunate that in discussing P. he works back from the *Trionfi* to the *Secret*, thus reversing the true chronological order.

<sup>4</sup> In his *Essays, Speculative and Suggestive*.



The age in which Petrarch lived was so vastly different from our own (in spite of superficial resemblances) that it is hard for us to conceive the "attractive pull" which it must have exercised upon his spirit. For many ages the mediæval man moved only in classes or castes; if he had a strong individuality, he was hardly conscious of it. The poets sang either simply for love of singing or for material reward; they practised their art as a craft, and scarcely looked for more than collective recognition. A great name was only valued so far as it was associated with power and influence; and in literature it was only attainable in the old sacerdotal and scholastic grooves. But the freedom and equality of social life in the Italian cities had already produced a vast change. In politics, letters, and art the individual was becoming a potent force; and one result of the change was the revival of the thirst for glory which had been so marked in the ancient world. But there was added a new note, distinctive of the rising passion for fame. The Roman notion of glory had been mainly that of reputation among living men<sup>1</sup> rather than among posterity; with Petrarch, as occasionally with Dante,<sup>2</sup> the latter was the dominating motive. Dante, however, was only an apparent exception; throughout his great poem, as Burckhardt well says,<sup>3</sup> "he firmly maintains the emptiness of fame, although in a manner which betrays that his heart was not set free from the longing for it." The same writer points out that in the *Inferno* the lost souls beg Dante to keep alive their memory upon earth, while in the *Purgatorio* they merely ask for his prayers, and also that in the *Paradiso* the saved souls, who have striven after earthly glory rather than heavenly love, are detained by this infirmity in the outskirts of the realms of bliss. Here we have the mediæval point of view, maintained by St. Augustine against Petrarch in the *Secret* but with this concession to the new spirit that the predominance of low motive on earth can be purged away in the next life and need not destroy all hope of salvation.

<sup>1</sup> This is especially the case with Cicero (see Elton, *op. cit.* pp. 41, 42). Seneca (*Epp.* 21, 6 and 79, 6) alludes to the praise of posterity, while affecting to despise it; and Boëthius, whose spirit is that of the Middle Ages, speaks of the oblivion of a man's name as his "second death" (*De Consolatione Philosophiæ*, II. 7).

<sup>2</sup> *Purg.* XI. 85-117.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* (trans. by Middlemore), I. 197.

The custom of honouring poets by an outward ceremonial symbol had already arisen in the free cities of Italy. Its mediæval origin is obscure; but before the middle of the thirteenth century a Franciscan poet, Fra Pacifico, is said to have been crowned by Frederick II. in Sicily with a wreath of laurel.<sup>1</sup> This shrub was apparently chosen because it was sacred to Apollo, the deity of poetry,<sup>2</sup> and the practice soon spread to Northern Italy. Bonatino of Padua is stated by Petrarch<sup>3</sup> to have been crowned in that city, though at what date is uncertain; and in December, 1314, Albertino Mussato was awarded the crown there by the University and city for a patriotic poem. I have already mentioned that Dante was invited in 1319 by Giovanni del Virgilio, Professor of Arts at Bologna, to receive the laurel crown in the University, and that in his first Eclogue<sup>4</sup> he refused, partly from fear of danger in the Guelf city, but chiefly because the desire of his heart was to be recalled to Florence and to receive the crown there in San Giovanni, where he had been baptized. To that desire he gives touching expression in the opening lines of the twenty-fifth canto of the *Paradiso*, which are thus rendered in Shadwell's translation:

" If for that sacred Poem's sake,  
Which Heaven and Earth have wrought to make  
And for long years gone by  
Have left me lean and dry,  
I may o'ercome the cruel hate  
From the fair fold that bars the gate  
Wherein a lamb I lay,  
Foe to the wolves that prey,  
Then with new fleece, with other strain  
Poet shall I return again  
With chaplet on my front  
At my baptismal font." <sup>5</sup>

These instances are cited—not as parallels to Petrarch's honour, which they only remotely resemble—but in order to show that the outward form of it was not without precedent in Italy. With the possible exception of the first—of which we

<sup>1</sup> A. Hortis, *Scritti Inediti di F. P.* (Trieste, 1874), p. 13, n. 2.

<sup>2</sup> P. in his Capitoline speech gives other reasons (see below).

<sup>3</sup> In *Ep. Metr.* II. xi. 72, 73, where he praises him as "nomine regue bonum."

<sup>4</sup> Ll. 42-44 and 48-50. See text and translation in Wicksteed and Gardner (*op. cit.*), pp. 154, 155.

<sup>5</sup> *Par.* XXV. ll. 1-9.

have no precise details—they were all local honours,<sup>1</sup> municipal or academic, conferred by a civic body or University, whose members had good reason to be proud of a fellow-citizen. It might seem as if Petrarch, living in a land of strangers,<sup>2</sup> were finally debarred from receiving any such recognition. No doubt he hoped at first to receive it from Robert, as Fra Pacifico had done from Frederick II. But with Naples he had no connexion, ancestral or other—a circumstance which might account for the King's hesitation. He had taken no University degree; and even if he had friends at Bologna—the place he knew best in Italy—his desertion of her principal course of study would have precluded such an offer. Therefore, since his native land seemed closed to him, it is no wonder that with Dionisio's help he turned his thoughts to Paris, where the ceremony would be a startling novelty, though the students would feel little sympathy for poetry or Roman literature. In this dilemma the invitation from the Roman Senate, of which—if I mistake not—he had never dreamed as a possibility, came like the flush of a rosy dawn after a long and stormy night. He knew all about the Capitoline contests<sup>3</sup> for distinction in poetry and music, instituted by Domitian; and though they had been in abeyance for more than a thousand years,<sup>4</sup> why should not the venerable city resume that hegemony in intellectual studies which she had so long lost?

It would be violating nature—Petrarch's nature especially—to suppose that he was not deeply affected by the personal honour which seemed to assure to him the fame that he coveted.

<sup>1</sup> See Hortis (*op. cit.*), p. 15, n.

<sup>2</sup> Murena (*op. cit.* p. 352) strangely says that P. had refused to be crowned by the Pope or the King of France. There is no record of such an offer by either potentate.

<sup>3</sup> For a description of these see Merivale, *History of the Romans under the Empire* (cr. 8vo. ed.), VII. 391, 392. He says, on the authority of Statius and Martial, that the victors were crowned with oak-leaves in gilded metal.

<sup>4</sup> P.'s *Privilegium Laureæ* says "1300 years"; in his speech he more accurately puts it as "more than 1200" (Hortis, p. 316), making Statius the last known recipient of the honour. (In this he is incorrect, for though Statius competed more than once, he was unsuccessful.) The contests were instituted in the year 86, and were to be celebrated every five years. Tiraboschi says, on the authority of an inscription, that the crown was awarded in 106 to Valerius Pudens, a boy of thirteen. De Sade (I. 426) asserts (giving no authority) that the competition was maintained quinquennially till the reign of Theodosius (A.D. 386) when it was abolished as a relic of superstition. The statement that Claudian was crowned rests on no evidence.



But mature reflection, as he paced the woods on that memorable day, might disclose a higher, less selfish point of view. He did not want to be considered merely a love-sick trifler—the author of vernacular sonnets bandied about from hand to hand. He was conscious of great powers and a mighty thirst for knowledge; and as the apostle of a new culture, he desired a wide influence, not simply for personal notoriety—that he might fill the place in the world to which he felt himself entitled—but also for the chance it gave him of communicating his enthusiasm for antiquity to an ever widening circle. He wished to lead students to something higher than the barren subtleties of scholastic logic and to induce them, while discarding a slavish reverence for names, to drink deeply themselves of the classic spirit. These are not mere speculations—the after-thoughts of critical ingenuity; for in his Latin speech on the Capitol, he plainly adumbrates this view, as we shall see later.

At the same time—whether by luck or by judgment—he took the very course which would effectually raise the ceremony from being a municipal honour decreed him by his friends to the rank of a “Spectacle,” enacted before the eyes of Christendom in the world’s capital. He would not go straight to Rome and assume the laurel, as if he had a clear title to it; he would first visit Naples and submit himself to the judgment of the Italian monarch, whose learning and sagacity were universally extolled. It was a brave decision; for although he may have felt full confidence in the result, which would bring honour even to his exalted examiner, he did not know the King personally, and he could only trust to his own tact and to the help of his friend to carry him through the ordeal. But in spite of the novelty of the project, he must have been aware, at least subconsciously, that it would add great *éclat* to the ceremony, and that it might help to stifle the murmurs of envy. The surest way to impress mankind is to appeal to the imagination, and his choice both of place and of examiner contributed to this result. It was a true instinct, which led our historian of the *Decline and Fall of Rome*, to give prominence to this episode in his final volume.<sup>1</sup>

We have no record of Petrarch’s occupations in the five months

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon, Vol. VIII. (ed. Milman and Smith) Chap. LXX. pp. 225–227. He styles the appointment of our English Laureate, which was borrowed from Italy, “a ridiculous custom” (p. 226, n. 8).

before his departure; but they must have been too busy for much letter-writing. He had to compose his Capitoline address and to prepare for his examination at Naples. He would need to explain his chosen procedure to the Roman authorities and to obtain by letter the King's consent to act as arbiter.<sup>1</sup> These months Petrarch spent mainly at Avignon<sup>2</sup>; but on the very eve of his departure he found time to write a letter to the Bishop of Lombez—now once more in his rustic diocese—of which these are the closing sentences<sup>3</sup>:

“ You may ask me, ‘ Why all this toil and eagerness and anxiety? Is the laurel going to make you a more learned or a better man? ’ A more famous one, perhaps, and so more exposed to the shafts of envy. The seat of knowledge and virtue is the mind; there they make their nest, and not in leafy branches, like little birds. ‘ Of what use is all this paraphernalia of leaves? ’ You want my answer? Here it is in the words of the Hebrew sage—‘ Vanity of vanities, all is vanity! ’ But that is how men are made.

“ *Avignon, February 15.* ”<sup>4</sup>

No doubt the Bishop sent a reply in prose to this most affectionate letter; and he enclosed with it a sonnet which Petrarch has preserved in his own handwriting in the autograph MS. of the *Canzoniere* at the Vatican. The composition is in a hyperbolic strain, declaring that if all the voices of dead and living were at his command, and if every atom of his dismembered limbs could find a tongue, they could not, for all their loudness,<sup>5</sup> express the joy which he felt at the poet's crowning. Long after

<sup>1</sup> In *Ep. Post.* (Frac. I. 8) P. speaks as if Robert did not know of his intention till he arrived at Naples. The fact is scarcely credible, and it may be a slip of memory. There was ample time to request permission by letter and receive a reply.

<sup>2</sup> I infer this from *Ep. Metr.* III. i. 25, 26, 29-36, where the “ *altera aestas* ”—the next summer after the storm—is plainly that of 1340 (which was a wet one); and his plans for defeating the Nymphs, which would have been carried out in autumn had he been at Vacluse, are said to have been frustrated by his journey to Rome.

<sup>3</sup> The first part of the letter is translated below (pp. 153, 154).

<sup>4</sup> De Sade (I. 435) gives the 16th; but a.d. XV. Kal. Mart. is the 15th.

<sup>5</sup> By the use of an inelegant metaphor to express the power of this cry

“ Gridassen come verberate putte ”

the Bishop violates the precept of Horace (*Ars. Poet.* 12) against mixing the savage with the gentle, or using a low conceit to express something higher.

the grave had closed over his friend,<sup>1</sup> Petrarch penned a reply, composed, as was the fashion of the day, in rhymes answering to those of the Bishop; it is a threnody, expressing his devotion to the memory of one, to whom he owed so much.

Boccaccio, in his *Life of Petrarch*, informs us that Azzo da Correggio accompanied the poet on his journey to Naples. Although we have no confirmation of this in the latter's correspondence, the statement is probably true. That restless intriguer, whose character we shall sketch in the next chapter,<sup>2</sup> was certainly meditating revolt against his nephew Mastino della Scala. The lord of Verona maintained a garrison in Parma, and at least till the year 1339 he placed entire confidence in his four maternal uncles (sons of Ghiberto da Correggio, of whom Azzo was the third) on account of their relationship to himself and their popularity in the city. But the Veronese yoke was weighing heavily upon Parma; and the Correggi were not unwilling to exploit the disaffection for their own advantage. Yet if the mine were to be well laid, it was essential to secure the aid or at least the neutrality of certain external powers. There is reason to suspect that Azzo's visit to Avignon was undertaken in order to "square" the Pope, who claimed feudal rights over Parma<sup>3</sup>; and a letter of Petrarch in the following May<sup>4</sup> seems to imply that Cardinal Colonna—and therefore of course his secretary—were in the secret. Azzo was also anxious to assure himself of the acquiescence of King Robert, and he had already been negotiating with Luchino Visconti, lord of Milan, for his active assistance. These two potentates took opposite sides in Italian politics; but Azzo was quite capable of employing irreconcilable arguments to incline each of them to his proposals.

Petrarch has left no letter describing his journey to Naples with Azzo; yet in spite of his dislike of the sea they clearly took this (the most direct) route or there would not have been time for the events crowded into the next seven weeks. Beccadelli says<sup>5</sup> that they embarked at Marseilles; and in favourable

<sup>1</sup> P. has placed this reply as Sonnet 54 in Part II. of the *Canzoniere* ("Mai non vedranno"), which may mean that it was written after 1348—especially as he has noted above it, "Responsio mea sera valde."

<sup>2</sup> See below, pp. 158–161.

<sup>3</sup> See Vol. I. p. 407, n. 1.

<sup>4</sup> F. IV. 9 (Frac. I. 220), "Parmam unde (*ut scis*) arcebamur."

<sup>5</sup> *Vita di F. P.*, p. xlvii. (in the 1725 Paris ed. of the *Rime*, Vol. I.).



circumstances the voyage might be accomplished in a fortnight. From later letters we gather only two particulars—that they had a strong north wind behind them,<sup>1</sup> which must have shortened the voyage; and that as they were approaching their destination, Petrarch plied the husky captain with questions about places on the Campanian shore and found that he knew nothing except the name of the promontory of Misenum.<sup>2</sup>

Robert, on hearing of his arrival, was “marvellously delighted”; and his visitor was much impressed by the King’s generous urbanity. The latter is described as tall and well-knit in frame; and his majestic features wore a habitual expression of philosophic calm.<sup>3</sup> If, as we have presumed, Petrarch’s visit was expected, he may have been the King’s guest in the Castel Nuovo during part of his stay. That massive fortress, built in the previous century by Charles of Anjou and surrounded by towers and a ditch, still stands on the shore adjoining the harbour. His sojourn in the city may have lasted about a month; but unfortunately the only connected account of it in his writings is the following very brief record in the *Epistle to Posterity*, which does not preserve the exact order of events.<sup>4</sup>

“After countless conversations on various matters I showed him that *Africa* of mine, with which he was so pleased that he begged me as a great favour to dedicate it to himself—a request that I certainly could not refuse, nor did I wish to do so. At length he fixed a day for the object of my visit, and kept me from noon till evening; and since the time proved too short for the press of subjects, he did the same on the two following days, till having for three days fully probed my ignorance, he adjudged me worthy of the laurel crown.”

Here Petrarch has no doubt “put the cart before the horse,” for the “conversations on various subjects” no doubt included the three days’ examination; and the reading of the *Africa*, followed by the request for its dedication, took place after the

Other biographers say that they sailed from Aigues Mortes; but there is no authority in P.’s letters for either place.

<sup>1</sup> *F. V.* 4 (*Frac. I.* 260) to the Cardinal.

<sup>2</sup> *Ep. Metr.* II. vii. (to Barbato), ll. 60–62. Levati (*Viaggi del P.* II. 18, 19) imagines a conversation, which is in flat contradiction to this passage.

<sup>3</sup> So says Murena (*op. cit.*) but without giving his authority.

<sup>4</sup> *Ep. Post.* (*Frac. I.* 8, 9).

announcement of the royal decision, and not long before his departure, if not at the final interview.<sup>1</sup> The examination probably came off about the middle of his visit, as he would have to await the King's leisure. It has been humorously called <sup>2</sup> "the longest *viva voce* on record"; but another feature of it was still more peculiar. Its subject was the character, methods, and uses of poetry; and of this the examiner was—by his own confession—almost totally ignorant. Therefore the usual rôle was reversed; the lead must have been taken, and almost all the talking done by the examinee. The questions proposed by the former—in spite of Petrarch's humble phrase, about "probing his ignorance"—must have been less for the purpose of testing the scholar than of informing his questioner. The examination must have been "public" in the sense that many others were present,<sup>3</sup> though perhaps not, as Tiraboschi says,<sup>4</sup> the whole court; and from the expressions used by Petrarch it would seem that some of the subjects discussed were those which he treated a month later in his Laureate speech on the Capitol.<sup>5</sup> The King was much impressed, and said frankly—perhaps at the close of the first day's colloquy—that he should spend much of the remaining time left him in the study of poetry. His visitor describes him as "most learned in the Scriptures, the dearest foster-child of philosophy, a splendid speaker, with an incredible knowledge of physics"; but he adds that he had but a superficial knowledge of poetry, and that he often said he repented of this in his old age.<sup>6</sup> Not long afterwards he remarked, in the hearing of Boccaccio, that he was sorry he had been so slow to understand the beauties of poetry and the merit of Virgil; he should never have believed that under the guise of poetic fiction it was possible to conceal ideas so sublime.<sup>7</sup> Finally, the King assembled his court, and formally declared that Petrarch was worthy of the laurel crown.

<sup>1</sup> In *Rev. Mem.* III. cap. iii. (B. ed. p. 513)—a work written much nearer the event than *Ep. Post.*—P. says it was "supremo digressu"; and the context leaves little doubt that he means the farewell audience.

<sup>2</sup> Hollway-Calthrop, p. 96.

<sup>3</sup> "Multis audientibus" (*Rev. Mem.* I. cap. ii. B. ed. p. 457).

<sup>4</sup> *Vita di F. P.* as reprinted in Soave, *Rime del P.* (1805), I. p. xxxiii.

<sup>5</sup> See below, pp. 142-144.

<sup>6</sup> *Rev. Mem.* (*ibid.*).

<sup>7</sup> Boccaccio, *De Genealogia Deorum*, XIV. cap. 21.

Some have asserted <sup>1</sup> that the author of the *Decameron*—then in his twenty-eighth year—was present as a humble member of the audience at this public display of learning. But it has been proved <sup>2</sup> that he left Naples for Florence towards the end of 1340, and so just missed seeing him, whom in after days he was proud to call his “master.” There is more to be said for his presence in Rome at the laurel-crowning; but the account of the ceremony given in his life of the poet may have been obtained from some traveller at second hand. Certainly in his letter to Brossano, Petrarch’s son-in-law,<sup>3</sup> after the death of the latter in 1374, he says, “I was his for forty years and more”; but this need only be taken to mean that in 1334 some of Petrarch’s Italian pieces had already reached Naples and were read with admiration at court.<sup>4</sup> This circumstance, however, throws light indirectly upon the poet’s position at Naples. He was already well known there, if not as a man of learning, yet at least as a graceful writer of vernacular sonnets; and the most cultivated courtiers would be eager to show attentions to one so famous, who was on the eve of receiving a unique honour. Petrarch therefore had an opportunity, which he did not neglect, of forming new friendships.

Among the higher nobles whose acquaintance he now made were Niccolo Alunno d’Alife, one of the judges of the supreme tribunal and afterwards Chancellor of the realm, and Guglielmo Maramaldo, whose great-uncle eighty years before had been one of the barons supporting Manfred against the Holy See.<sup>5</sup> To both these courtiers, of whom the first at least was a partner in the King’s studies, he wrote letters in after years.<sup>6</sup> But he became really intimate with two other luminaries of the legal

<sup>1</sup> As Domenico Rossetti in his *P. Giulio Celso e Boccaccio* (Trieste, 1828), p. 363, n. 11.

<sup>2</sup> E. Hutton (*Giovanni Boccaccio*, 1910, p. 59) says that Della Torre has proved by documents that Boccaccio was in Florence on January 11, 1341; but the last citation from his works (n. 7, p. 126) shows (as against Mr. Hutton) that he was again in Naples before Robert’s death.

<sup>3</sup> F. Corazzini, *Lettere di G. Boccaccio* (Florence, 1877), p. 382, “quadraginta annis vel amplius suus fui.” P. did not meet Boccaccio till 1350.

<sup>4</sup> Koerting (*op. cit.* p. 150) thinks it impossible, but he must have overlooked this conclusive proof. Of course the King may not have heard of the sonnets, for his studies were on a higher plane.

<sup>5</sup> *Sen. (Frac.)* ii. 157.

<sup>6</sup> To d’Alife, *Ep. Metr.* II. vi. and viii.; to Maramaldo, *Sen.* XI. 5, and XV. 4.



profession—Marco Barbato of Sulmona (the city of Ovid) and Giovanni Barili of Naples. Barbato was probably of lower origin than the other three. He had begun life as a humble notary, like Petracco; but on April 15, 1338, the King nominated him judge of contracts for a year in the Abruzzi Lavoro, and soon after made him a judge for life.<sup>1</sup> It was probably his love of learning as well as his blameless character that recommended him to Robert. Petrarch describes <sup>2</sup> Barbato as

“a man the most gentle and upright and candid under the sun, a great lover of literature in which he was highly skilled, but a despiser of all other pleasures, incapable of arrogance or envy, a writer of keen intelligence, pleasant style, rich learning, and ready memory.”

Writing to Barbato himself,<sup>3</sup> he praises his “great humility and affection, his adamantine opinions and sentiments rooted in flint.” Yet he only saw him on his two visits to Naples, neither of which much exceeded a month. A manuscript of Barbato’s poems was traditionally said to be in the hands of the Observant Fathers at Sulmona, but was lost at the suppression of the monasteries.<sup>4</sup> He was also a close friend of Boccaccio and of the Seneschal Niccolo Acciaiuoli. Giovanni Barili, though interested in literature, was no poet, but rather an official of high lineage, who had filled important posts. He must have been rather older than Petrarch; for he was sent as envoy to the Pope as early as 1327, and he had served under Robert’s son Charles, Duke of Calabria, who died in 1328. His family was of Naples,<sup>5</sup> but his country seat was at Pompiniano near Otranto. He was a royal chamberlain, in great credit at court, and had

<sup>1</sup> N. Faraglia, *I due amici del P., Giovanni Barrilli [sic] e Marco Barbato*, in *Archivio Storico per le provincie Napoletane*, Anno IX. fasc. i. (1884), pp. 35–58. This writer strangely confuses the incidents of P.’s two visits to Naples in 1341 and 1343, placing the trip to Baiae in the former year.

<sup>2</sup> *Sen.* III. 4 (to an unknown friend of them both, probably Giovanni Quatrario).

<sup>3</sup> *Var.* 22 (Frac. III. 356).

<sup>4</sup> Faraglia, pp. 49, 50.

<sup>5</sup> Faraglia proves this (p. 39), as against Rossetti and Baldelli, who say he was of Capua. Fracassetti imagines (*It.* V. p. 419) that he was born at Ida in Crete, because he is called “Idæus” in *Ecl.* II.—a most unlikely supposition. The name merely affords proof (see *Var.* 49) that P., after his fashion with his intimates, had nicknamed him “Jupiter”—the god called “Idæus” from his Cretan nurture.

filled offices in the provincial justiciary. But though a man of affairs, he was interested in ancient literature, and had assisted Boccaccio in his youthful studies at Naples. So also had a far more learned man, Paolo di Perugia, the King's librarian, to whom our poet must have been introduced, though he does not mention his name. Paolo, like Petrarch, was an acquaintance of the monk Barlaam, and probably also took lessons from him in Greek.

To some of these courtiers Robert delegated the duty of entertaining his guest in the hours of relaxation. Petrarch mentions <sup>1</sup> one such excursion, which he says was a hurried one, to the Grotto of Pausilippo between Naples and Pozzuoli. This remarkable tunnel is about two miles <sup>2</sup> from Naples; it is from half to three-quarters of a mile long, and broad enough for two carriages to pass. It is a disputed point whether it was made by the first Greek colonists of the bay or by Roman engineers; but it is mentioned by Strabo <sup>3</sup> and by Seneca,<sup>4</sup> the latter of whom calls it "Crypta Neapolitana." Addison expresses the opinion <sup>5</sup> that originally it was a quarry, driven from both ends into the volcanic tufa for building stone, and that it was an after-thought to unite the two excavations in order to make a shorter land-route for travellers between the two towns. It is some support to this view that the middle of the tunnel is much less high (about thirty feet) than the two ends. On the hill above the Neapolitan exit stands the reputed tomb of Virgil; and it was then widely believed in Naples that the Roman poet had himself accomplished the work by his magical arts in a single night.

The King was not of the party <sup>6</sup>; but at his next interview

<sup>1</sup> In the *Itin. Syr.* (B. ed. p. 621) and in *Ep. Metr.* II. vii. 51, 52. De Sade (I. 439), usually so careful in giving his authorities, cites only Villani's *Chronicles of Naples*, who borrows the anecdote from the first passage.

<sup>2</sup> Addison (*loc. cit.* n. 5 below) calls it eight miles, but Pozzuoli itself is only five miles.

<sup>3</sup> Smith (*Dict. of Greek and Roman Geography*, II. 410) asserts without reference that Strabo attributes it to the Augustan engineer Cocceius; but de Sade (I. 436) says that Strabo ascribes to Cocceius another tunnel between Cumæ and Lake Avernus.

<sup>4</sup> *Ep.* 57 (vi. 5). He complains of the dust in the tunnel (which has since been paved) and says that there is no breathing-hole, which is not true of its present condition.

<sup>5</sup> *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy* (ed. 1753), p. 135.

<sup>6</sup> This is distinctly implied in *Ep. Metr.* II. vii. 52-55. De Sade,

with Petrarch he asked him what he thought of the popular tradition. The poet replied with a smile that he had nowhere read that Virgil was a sorcerer; at which the King gravely nodded and admitted that the tunnel showed marks of iron tools. Petrarch expresses the view that the proximity of the tomb gave rise to the general belief, and sagely remarks that a great renown often creates fables about its possessor. It must have needed some courage to oppose a tradition, which was then devoutly believed and has lasted almost to our own time.<sup>1</sup> In the later Middle Ages Virgil was regarded almost as a greater magician than poet<sup>2</sup>; and it is characteristic of Petrarch's new standpoint towards antiquity that he should be able to laugh off stories, to which men of high position listened with respect. In the passage above quoted he says that "the jaws of the hollowed mountain are narrow,<sup>3</sup> but very long and black, and maintain the constant darkness of dread night," adding that the tunnel was regarded with superstitious awe and that (evidently for that reason) no robberies or attacks by brigands were ever committed at a spot so favourable to their success.

The King was accustomed to relieve his mind from the heavy cares of state not merely by literature and study, but by regular bodily exercises. He was specially devoted to archery—*i.e.* to competitions with a cross-bow, either at a fixed target or perhaps at pigeons let loose for the purpose<sup>4</sup>; and every day at a fixed hour he resorted to an open space in the castle grounds, sloping down to the harbour but elsewhere surrounded by a wall, and

who states the contrary (I. 439), had probably forgotten this passage, but had Mr. Baddeley, who criticizes him (*op. cit.* p. 262), seen it? Robert's absence was from no impediment of age or dignity; for he was wont to ride about the streets of Naples on his white horse (*Ep. Metr.* II. vi. 18).

<sup>1</sup> Addison (*loc. cit.*) says of his own day that "Virgil is in greater repute with the Neapolitans for having made the Grotto than for the *Æneid*." See also, for later instances the work quoted in the next note (Eng. trans., 1908, pp. 372, 373).

<sup>2</sup> See Vol. II. ("Virgil in Popular Legend") of the learned work by Domenico Comparetti, *Virgilio nel Medio Evo* (2 vols., Florence, 1898).

<sup>3</sup> The entrances are said to be about seventy feet high and twenty broad. Erasmus visited the spot in April, 1509, with Prince Alexander of Scotland, and speaks of "the little speck of light like a star," which greets the traveller as he proceeds (*Opera Omnia*, Leyden, 1703-1706, 230 D.).

<sup>4</sup> *Rev. Mem.* I. cap. i. (B. ed. p. 444). The passage is obscure and perhaps corrupt. If the "de dimetiendis ictibus acclinis" refers to Robert, it seems strange that he should not have employed a marker,



took part in contests, in which, according to Petrarch, he excelled the greatest masters of the craft. The poet was often present on these occasions, either among the general crowd of courtiers or as one of a privileged few; but he does not say whether he figured as a competitor. From a chance expression in a later letter <sup>1</sup> we may infer that he was shocked at the contrast between the simple, religious life led by Robert and his devout Queen Sancia, and the dissolute habits of some of the courtiers.

From scattered notices in his works we may conclude that, after the three days' public display, he was honoured with frequent private interviews on literary topics. We may fancy that these conferences took place in an embrasure of the royal study, from which Robert loved to contemplate the beauties of the Bay of Naples.<sup>2</sup> We know that not only poetry, but history and geography were discussed. It was at the King's instance <sup>3</sup> that Petrarch used every effort to discover the second decade of Livy, but without success. In the following century a map of Italy was in existence which was said to have been prepared by the poet in collaboration with Robert.<sup>4</sup> One day the latter asked him why he had not visited him sooner, and on Petrarch's alleging the difficulties of travel and the impediments of fortune, he was asked whether he had ever been at the court of Philip of Valois.

"I replied that I had never thought of such a thing; and when he smiled and asked for a reason, I said that I did not care to be a useless burden to an illiterate King, and that I preferred to preserve my sworn pact with poverty rather than approach a court in which I could neither understand them, nor they me. He then said he had heard that the King's eldest son was not averse from study.<sup>5</sup> I replied that I had heard so too, and that this so displeased his father as to make him regard his son's tutors as his mortal foes. I added that I could not vouch for the truth of the rumour, but that it had destroyed in my mind the faintest notion of going there. At these words that noble spirit groaned, and his whole frame shivered; and after keeping

<sup>1</sup> *F. V.* 1 (to Barbato), of February, 1343.

<sup>2</sup> *Ep. Metr.* II. vi. 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Rev. Mem.* I. cap. ii. (B. ed. p. 448).

<sup>4</sup> A. Hortis (*Op. Lat. del Boccaccio*, p. 235) says that Flavio Biondo in his *Italia Illustrata* claims to have followed a map of Italy which had been drawn by P. and Robert.

<sup>5</sup> See below, Book VI. Chap. XXXII, for an estimate of King John's attainments.

his eyes fixed for awhile on the ground in silence (I have the scene before me as I write), he raised his head in manifest indignation, saying, 'Such is man's life, and such the variety of his wishes and pursuits! For myself, I swear that literature is far sweeter and dearer to me than my crown; and if I had to lose one of them, I had much rather it were the latter than the former.' "

Petrarch apostrophizes this utterance as "truly philosophical and worthy of the reverence of all men of learning," adding that it had struck him so forcibly as to afford great encouragement to his own studies.<sup>1</sup>

It must have been at one of these conferences that he read to Robert at least some portion of his unfinished *Africa*; for that was a privilege that he would accord only to his private ear. Finally the King condescended to entreat him to receive the crown from his own hands in Naples. The request placed Petrarch in a position of some delicacy. He owed much to Robert's gracious kindness; and sovereigns usually expect to bend men to their lightest wish. With his usual tact he managed to persuade Robert that he was irrevocably pledged to his friends at Rome, and that but for his love of the Eternal City with all its classical associations he could not have refused so great a distinction. Robert was sensible enough to take no offence, and ordered letters to the Roman Senate to be prepared recommending him for the honour. He added that only his age, not his high rank, prevented him from going to Rome to confer it in person. He deputed the knight Giovanni Barili and at least one other courtier<sup>2</sup> to represent him on the occasion. He also issued letters<sup>3</sup> patent (dated April 2) appointing Petrarch his chaplain and familiar domestic. As a final and supreme mark of honour, he took his royal mantle from his own shoulders and presented it to the poet, with the injunction that he should wear it at the ceremony.<sup>4</sup>

The last circumstance, as Koerting has remarked,<sup>5</sup> was

<sup>1</sup> *Rer. Mem.* I. cap. ii. (B. ed. 456, 457).

<sup>2</sup> So we may conclude from *F.* IV. 7 (to Robert), of which he was the bearer.

<sup>3</sup> Published in J. P. Tomasini, *P. Redivivus* (1650), pp. 65, 66.

<sup>4</sup> *Ep. Metr.* II. i. 60-68 (to Barili). Koerting asserts (pp. 166-168) that the mantle was of purple, but this is a "purple patch," for the poem says nothing of its colour.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 167.

unique in the later Middle Ages. Since the time of Alcuin, with whom Charlemagne lived in close familiarity and who was called "the Emperor's delight," there had been no such recognition by a crowned head of intellectual eminence. The mediæval Prince looked upon scholars and poets as a superior kind of craftsmen, who needed indeed to be well paid, but whose services had a definite market value. As a natural consequence, the obsequious singer tuned his strains to his patron's taste and expected to be rewarded in proportion. Robert's gift of his mantle was a gift of honour pure and simple, which was the more significant for being unaccompanied by a more substantial present.<sup>1</sup> The "Wise King" has been accused of avarice in his declining years; but it was no instance of this failing that he did not reward Petrarch with a pension out of his privy purse. The poet had visited him in quest of personal distinction, not of material gain; and the meaning of his visit would have been lost, had the Prince attributed his coming to the baser motive. It is, however, rather over-emphatic to say that henceforth "the prince looked up to the poet as the man of divine gifts; the prince of the earth bowed to the prince of the spirit; and the crown of genius dimmed the lustre of the royal diadem."<sup>2</sup> The posthumous fame of Petrarch has certainly eclipsed that of his royal host; but so has Dante's renown dimmed that of Can Grande, whose bread "was salt to his taste and his stairs hard to tread." The comparison is an unfair one; for the domain of kingship is in the present rather than in the future, in action rather than in thought. What was really new in Robert's relations with our poet and specially redounds to his credit was his recognition of a simple burgher as worthy of supreme honour on account of his learning and genius. Hitherto the rewarding of such men had been left solely to the Church, in whose ranks they had chiefly been found. Henceforward the duty devolved upon civil rulers and in the next two centuries was increasingly exercised by them in Italy as a highly valued privilege.

On the Monday or Tuesday in Holy Week (April 2 or 3)<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The appointment of chaplain was apparently honorary, for the letters of appointment speak only of "honours, favours, privileges and prerogatives," not of pay.

<sup>2</sup> Koerting, p. 169.

<sup>3</sup> De Sade (II. 2), with no authority but his own conjecture, says



Petrarch left Naples along with the royal representatives and still apparently in company with his friend Azzo.<sup>1</sup> Barili, however, parted from the rest on the journey, having business to transact in the provinces, but with a promise that he would not fail to be in Rome before the appointed day. The main party reached Rome on Good Friday or the evening before<sup>2</sup>; and next day, as Barili did not appear, a courier was dispatched to speed his arrival. He returned without finding a trace of him; and in fact, though they did not know it till afterwards, the knight had been waylaid either by brigands or personal enemies near Anagni,<sup>3</sup> and was compelled to turn back to Naples.

There can be little doubt that the crowning took place, as originally arranged,<sup>4</sup> on Easter Day (April 8), although Petrarch, writing three weeks later to Barbato, fixes it (perhaps by a copyist's mistake) on April 13.<sup>5</sup> There is a far more serious difficulty about the Senatorship of Count Orso, which in his verses to Barili Petrarch represents as expiring on the day of the crowning, alleging this fact as a reason for not waiting for his friend. Yet in a Papal letter cited by Gregorovius<sup>6</sup> we find the same Senators in office as late as July 23 following. Petrarch's expression cannot be taken literally<sup>7</sup>; for the usual term of the Senatorial office was not a year, as with the ancient consuls

April 4. But if P. arrived (as we gather from *Ep. Metr.* II. i.) at the latest on Good Friday, that date does not allow sufficient time for the journey. In *Ep. Metr.* II. xvi. 145, 146, P. allows four days for the journey from Rome to Naples; and we know that he did not start till April 2, for he would take with him his letters of appointment as chaplain.

<sup>1</sup> So we gather from a phrase in the letter to Barbato (*F.* IV. 8).

<sup>2</sup> *Ep. Metr.* II. i. 24.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *F.* IV. 8. Fracassetti's MSS. read "Hernicorum" (Anagni was in their territory); but the "Colbertin" MS. at Paris has "inimicorum."

<sup>4</sup> See the letter to the Bishop of Lombez (*F.* IV. 6, p. 154, below).

<sup>5</sup> *F.* IV. 8. "Idibus Aprilis." The MSS. seem to give no various reading here, but it is impossible to suppose that P., however careless as to dates, could have so soon forgotten such a red-letter day. The letter to Barili (*Ep. Metr.* II. i.) does not specify the day; but the *Privilegium Laureæ* expressly says "hodierno Paschalis die," though at the close it is dated "V. Idus" (April 9), perhaps by an oversight, because it was prepared on that day. Boccaccio, in his *Life of P.* as published by Rossetti (*P, G. C. e Boccaccio*, pp. 320, 379), gives "VI. Idus"; but the Marquis de Valori, in his edition of the same (p. 48), writes it "V. Idus," and Boccaccio had doubtless seen a copy of the *Privilegium*.

<sup>6</sup> Vol. VI. Part i. (Eng. trans.), p. 201, n.

<sup>7</sup> *Ep. Metr.* II. i. 24, 25, "ut omne Senatus Tempore jus hausto flueret" and 35 "Urgehat consumpti terminus anni." In the excitement of the time he may have misunderstood the difficulty as explained to him.

(though he may have thought it to be so), but six months, unless for special reasons it was prolonged. We do not know exactly when this Senatorship began,<sup>1</sup> but in any case it must have lasted longer than six months, and March 1 (not Easter Day) was the usual date for vacating the office. It was necessary for the Pope to confirm all such elections, though he did not usually nominate, unless expressly requested to do so; and the only solution I can offer is that the Senators had been elected for a second term (the first having expired), but that the Pope's confirmation had not arrived, and that in this difficulty the Council had by resolution prolonged their office till Easter. In due course the Papal letters would arrive and they would resume office.<sup>2</sup>

Varied indeed had been the scenes enacted in the past on the Mount of the Capitol. On the highest point, the Arx, where the Temple of Jupiter stood—occupied at this time by the Convent of Ara Cæli—the Roman generals had celebrated their triumphs over the city's foes, attended by jubilant crowds. In the prison behind the "Tabularium" (Record Office)—over which stood now the palace of the Senators—the leaders of the conquered peoples were put to death just before the thanksgiving sacrifices were offered in the Temple. On the same summit—perhaps in one of the courts of the Temple—Domitian instituted his quinquennial contests for poets and playwrights. But in the fourteenth century—except for the foundations of the "Tabularium"—all these remains of triumphal Rome had been swept away. So absolutely had the Temple disappeared that its precise site is still a matter of dispute. The platform below the Arx—the "saddle" between the two heights—was now occupied by the Square of the Capitol ("Area Capitolina"), on the side of which adjoining the Forum had been erected, about two hundred years before, the first communal or Senatorial palace of the mediæval republic. It was in attacking this stronghold of nascent liberty that a Pope (Lucius II. in 1145) received his death-blow from a stone. When Rome's turbulent freedom had been established, a market was

<sup>1</sup> See n. 2, p. 113 above.

<sup>2</sup> Hortis (*Scrit. Ined.* p. 21) notices the difficulty, but does not attempt to solve it. Koerting suggests (p. 171, n. 2) that the Senators presided alternately and that it was merely Count Orso's term which was expiring. But he gives no authority for this supposed practice, and the hypothesis leaves P.'s phrase unexplained.

held weekly in the Capitoline Square ; and it still remained " the heart of Rome "—the favourite spot for popular assemblies.

In these early times the palace was a square crenellated building flanked by a single tower, with no external platform or " loggia," and therefore no " rostrum " from which the people could be addressed. But in 1299—just before the jubilee of Boniface VIII.—the Senators constructed a " loggia " on the front façade, reached by steps on either side ; and just after that event—probably from the vast contributions of the pilgrims<sup>1</sup>—the palace was entirely remodelled. This was the era of the finest municipal structures of Italy in the Romanesque Gothic, as the " Palazzo Vecchio " of Florence, and the town-halls of Siena, Perugia, and Orvieto. The Senatorial palace could not compare with such buildings ; it was merely a renovated fortress, flanked now by two towers and consisting of two stories over a ground-floor adorned by columns, where the courts of justice were held.<sup>2</sup> Over these, on the first storey, was the Hall of the " Assectamentum," or great audience-chamber of the Senators, the entrance to which was from the " loggia," approached by outside staircases. It was lighted, not by windows, but by this main entrance and by another doorway on each side of it leading on to balconies—probably also by embrasures on the opposite side overlooking the Forum. At one end of the hall was the stone-seat or throne of the presiding Senator, surmounted by a wooden canopy, lined with velvet. Here were held meetings of the Council, and all public ceremonies which did not include an address to the people from the " loggia " outside. Here Henry VII. and Louis the Bavarian held their " parliaments," or addressed the people, as occasion required ; and the former, who had been obliged to storm the Capitol, probably demolished some of the external defences of the palace. Within its precincts was kept a live lion in a cage, as representing the majesty of Rome ; and Louis is said to have forced into the cage, as " a second Daniel," a certain Augustinian Prior, who refused to say mass at his coronation.

Six years later, and seven years before the Petrarch ceremony

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. I. p. 10, n. 2.

<sup>2</sup> For these details see E. Rodocanachi, *The Roman Capitol in Ancient and Modern Times*, translated by F. Lawton, 1906, pp. 64–78, and Gregorovius (*op. cit.*), Vol. V. pt. ii. pp. 677, 678.



(Lent, 1334), Rome was invaded by a host of 10,000 "Flagellants," gaunt and unkempt, who called themselves "Doves" or "Brethren of the Dove."<sup>1</sup> Their leader, the Dominican Fra Venturino, gave an address from the "loggia" to the Roman populace in the Square of the Capitol. They listened patiently to his Latin harangue and openly criticized its mistakes. When he said that the Pope ought to live in Rome, they shouted approval; but when he added that the dust of Rome's dead was holy, but its living people godless, he was greeted with mocking laughter. Whereupon he left Rome, declaring it was the most corrupt city in the world.<sup>2</sup> The sharp contrast between this incident on the Capitol and that which we are about to describe—so close in time, yet so different from its outward trappings of fanaticism—marks the advent of a new age of culture for the ruined and half-desolate city.

It was on this historic spot that Francesco Petrarca—himself a clerk and, though an Italian, a resident for many years in Rome's upstart rival, Avignon—was to be honoured for his learning and genius by the Roman people and their secular magistrates. It was to be a purely municipal act, unaccompanied by Papal or ecclesiastical sanction, yet performed in the sight of the world by the city which was still believed to be its capital. It is matter for much regret, as Gibbon long ago remarked,<sup>3</sup> that Petrarch has left us no minute description of so memorable a day. Among his many friends who must have expected an account of it at first hand there were two at least—the Cardinal and the Bishop—to whom he owed full particulars of a distinction which they had helped him so much to win. I suspect that he wrote many such letters; but that when he formed his collection in 1359, they seemed to him to have been written with too much enthusiasm and too little modesty for him to publish them to a world, which had already treated the occasion with ridicule and envy.<sup>4</sup> All

<sup>1</sup> The Holy Spirit.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* Vol. VI. Part i. 189-191. The friar repaired to Avignon, where he was tried for heresy, and, though acquitted, kept in remote confinement as a dangerous fanatic.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. VIII. p. 228, n. 15 (ed. *cit.*).

<sup>4</sup> See *Ep. Metr.* II. xi. (to "Zoilus," a nameless detractor), written about 1350. The ridicule belongs chiefly to a much later time. In the following century Maffeo Vegio, who had the presumption to continue the *Æneid* and was afterwards burlesqued in English, scoffed at P. for resting his reputation "on the certificate of an ignorant notary" (with reference to the *Privilegium*). See his *De educatione liberorum* (Lib. II. cap. 7).

that he has preserved is a verse-letter to Barili,<sup>1</sup> written in haste nine months later, in which he briefly summarizes the incidents of the day, as a consolation to his friend for his enforced absence. Towards the end of the poem is a warm recognition of the King's kindness, especially in the gift of his mantle; and this is perhaps the chief object of its composition. He does not say whether the ceremony took place under cover or in the open air; but this doubt has been removed by the recently discovered text of his laureate speech,<sup>2</sup> which proves that it was in the Senatorial audience-chamber.<sup>3</sup> He says that the nobles were assembled at short notice, and that the people, who gathered in great force, were summoned by sound of trumpet. There was the usual buzz of conversation till the trumpet ceased, and he—the hero of the day—stepped forward and gave his address upon a line of Virgil. He tells us that it was brief, and it may have been cut short by the Senator's desire; but the speech that we possess must have taken more than half an hour in delivery. At its conclusion Count Orso addressed him from the Senatorial chair, and finally laid the laurel wreath upon his head amid loud applause from the "Quirites."<sup>4</sup> Then the aged Stefano Colonna stepped forward

A hundred years later (in 1549) an account of P.'s crowning was published at Padua, professing to be by his friend, Sennuccio Delbene. It is in the form of a letter to Can Grande della Scala, lord of Verona (who died twelve years before the event), and asserts that Cino da Pistoia celebrated it in poetry, though he died in 1337! Its "editor" was one Girolamo Marcatelli, Canon of Padua, who is generally credited with the fabrication. Regarded as a mere burlesque, it is amusing and even ingenious; but the reverend author might have employed his time to better purpose than in a travesty of his illustrious predecessor. No wonder that Beccadelli (in his *Vita di F. P.*, ed. *cit.* p. L) pours the vials of his wrath upon the forger. De Sade gives a French translation in t. II. Note xii. pp. 5-9. Yet an edition of it was published at Rome in 1874 (Salviucci), in which the anonymous editor has the temerity to plead that there was a genuine original, subsequently falsified. It is curious that Sennuccio should have been chosen as the pseudonymous author, for he may possibly have been present, since he was with Barili at Naples in January, 1342 (see *Var.* 57).

<sup>1</sup> *Ep. Metr.* II. i. The verses are not dated; but we know from a letter (*Var.* 57), which was sent with them to his correspondent, that the 100 lines were written in a day without time for revision, as the messenger was in a hurry to depart.

<sup>2</sup> First published by Hortis (*Scritti Inediti del P.*, Trieste, 1874, pp. 311-328).

<sup>3</sup> See p. 318, where he quotes a speech of Cicero "in that very hall in the presence of Julius Cæsar." P. was no archæologist; but it is strange he should suppose that the palace had stood for 1,400 years. In the poem (l. 40) he calls it *tectum vetustum*.

<sup>4</sup> Gregorovius (VI. Pt. i. p. 213) imagines the presence of "Cola di Rienzo, the enthusiastic youth intoxicated with recollections of antiquity,

and pronounced such an ample eulogy of the poet as to bring blushes to his brow. He was wearing upon his shoulders the royal mantle; this alone would have reminded him, if he could possibly have forgotten, how much he owed to the King's goodness. A procession was then formed and traversed the streets to St. Peter's, where Petrarch deposited his crown before the high altar.<sup>1</sup>

There is another account, professing to be contemporary and possibly by an eye-witness, which gives more minute particulars. It is a fragment of the "Reminiscences" of Lodovico Buonconte Monaldeschi, a gentleman of Orvieto, born there in June, 1327, and educated at Rome. The extract was first published by Tomasini in his *Petrarcha Redivivus* (3rd ed. 1650) from a MS. in the Borghese Library; and the whole work was first printed by Muratori in his collection of mediæval writers (1728).<sup>2</sup> It relates that the opening procession was headed by twelve youths of noble families,<sup>3</sup> about fifteen years of age, clothed in red, who recited verses composed by Petrarch in honour of Rome.<sup>4</sup> These were followed by six noble citizens<sup>5</sup> attired in green, each carrying a garland of flowers. Behind them walked the Senator, Count Orso, attended by the chief nobles and with a laurel crown upon his head. When he had taken his seat upon the Senator's chair, he bade Petrarch (whose place in the procession is not stated) stand forward. The poet appeared in a long robe, and cried, "Viva the Roman People and the Senator! May God maintain them in liberty!" He then kneeled before the Senator, who took the crown from his own head and placed it upon the poet's, saying, "This crown is the reward of virtue."

whom P. then saw for the second time." He may, of course, have seen P. both in 1337 and in 1341; but P. knew nothing of him till 1343 at Avignon.

<sup>1</sup> In this highly Christian act, whether consciously or not, P. was reproducing a feature of the triumph of an "Imperator" who, on reaching the Temple, laid his wreath in the lap of Jupiter's image.

<sup>2</sup> *Rev. Ital. Scriptores Medii Aevi* (Milan, 1723-1751), XII. 540.

<sup>3</sup> They are specified as of the houses of Altieri, Caffarelli, Cancellieri, Capozuchi, Crescentio, Cuccino, della Fumo, Lucii, Paparese, Papazuri, Rosci, and Trincia.

<sup>4</sup> There has been much useless speculation as to these verses, but we may be sure that they were not the poems to Benedict XII. (see Vol. I. pp. 401-402), as has been supposed.

<sup>5</sup> One each from the Annibaldi, Conti, Montanaro, Orsini, Paparese, and Savelli. I imagine (see Vol. I. p. 342) that Mr. Hollway-Calthrop (p. 98) must be wrong in his conjecture—for it is no more—that the "Annibaldi" was P.'s friend Paolo.



The latter then repeated a fine sonnet in praise of the ancient Romans,<sup>1</sup> and the people broke out into loud applause, crying, "Viva the Capitol and the Poet!" Another Roman diarist<sup>2</sup> adds the probable detail that Stefano Colonna afterwards gave a banquet in the palace near S.S. Apostoli to the Laureate and all who took part in the ceremony.

In Monaldeschi's account there is nothing inherently improbable, unless it be (as Gregorovius thinks)<sup>3</sup> that Count Orso first appeared with the crown upon his own head. The details recorded are those which a boy would notice, and those omitted—as the Latin speech<sup>4</sup> and the address by the veteran Stefano—are such as a boy would find tiresome. Hortis thinks<sup>5</sup> that the passage was written many years later, and that Monaldeschi was not himself an eye-witness. But the names of the families represented could scarcely have been remembered long afterwards without the aid of contemporary notes; and the record of Petrarch being vested "in a long robe" is historically exact. Gregorovius,<sup>6</sup> whose opinion must carry great weight, thinks the whole work spurious, principally because it speaks of Stefano Colonna the younger as the second Senator and of his occupying the office at this time for five years, which is demonstrably false. There are other suspicious points about the production as a whole—as *e.g.* that the author remembers the coming of Louis the Bavarian (when he was but six months old), and that he says he lived to the age of 115 years without illness, spending only his last twelve months in bed from natural infirmity. As de Sade drily remarks,<sup>7</sup> it must be the only known case of a man recording the circumstances of his own last illness and death. But this may only mean that the manuscript has been clumsily "doctored" by some survivor, who has added

<sup>1</sup> This is a suspicious touch. P. would surely have preserved such a sonnet, and yet it has no place in the *Canzoniere*.

<sup>2</sup> Gentile Delfino, in *Muratori* (*op. cit.* Tom. III. Pt. ii. 843). Here we have another memento of an "imperial triumph"; for a feast was given to the "Imperator," within the Temple.

<sup>3</sup> *Loc. cit.* p. 213, n.

<sup>4</sup> Gregorovius supposes (p. 212, n.) that the author was acquainted with P.'s speech, but I see no proof of this.

<sup>5</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 21.

<sup>6</sup> *Loc. cit.* p. 212. His opinion of its spuriousness rests upon his view of the whole work (see the text above) rather than upon the special passage referring to Petrarch.

<sup>7</sup> Vol. II. Appendix (second paging), Note xiv. p. 2.

details about the author, still written in the first person. The document, however, must remain suspect, though its reminiscences, if written down in old age and inaccurate from failure of memory, may have some foundation in fact.

Boccaccio in his life (or rather "panegyric") of Petrarch, which was written within four years of the crowning and before he knew him personally,<sup>1</sup> does not describe the ceremony, yet he speaks of it in a way that implies knowledge of the main facts. We have noted that the honour was promoted and bestowed chiefly by laymen; but Boccaccio states that many of the clergy were among the audience.<sup>2</sup> If he were not present himself, he must have received a minute sketch of "the Laureate's" appearance and manner from some one who knew him well. He describes him as

"tall and handsome—with a round face and complexion between fair and dark, but inclining to swarthinness; with a glance grave, yet cheerful and denoting keen intelligence; with a gentle manner and graceful gestures. He has an engaging smile, but never bursts into loud and senseless laughter; his gait is modest, his speech placid and humorous. He rarely speaks unless addressed, and then answers his questioner in so weighty a manner as to attract even the ignorant,"

and entice them to listen to even a long discourse, as to the songs of the Sirens.<sup>3</sup> The allusions here to Petrarch's dignified utterance and gestures, confirmed as they are by later testimony,<sup>4</sup> suggest that either the writer or his informant had heard him speak in public; and in mentioning the crowning, Boccaccio expressly refers to the poet's speech as "a marvellously ornate eulogy of the Muses."

That speech was discovered about half a century ago<sup>5</sup>; and

<sup>1</sup> He relates P.'s visit to Parma after the crowning, and says, "ibique . . . moratus usque in hodiernum." He may have been ignorant of his return to Avignon in 1342 and visit to Naples in 1343. See Dom. Rossetti, *P. Giulio Celso e Boccaccio*, p. 321.

<sup>2</sup> See the same text of the life "coram omni clero et populo," p. 320.

<sup>3</sup> Text (*op. cit.*), pp. 321, 322.

<sup>4</sup> See above, Vol. I. p. 416.

<sup>5</sup> The codex is in the Magliabecchian collection of the Laurentian Library at Florence. It is of the second half of the fifteenth century, and contains also the lives of Dante, P. and Boccaccio by Giannozzo Manetti, the life of P. (anon.) by Domenico Aretino, the *Privilegium Laureæ* and P.'s *Penitential Psalms*. It must have escaped the diligence of P.'s first editors.

while interesting from many points of view, it scarcely increases our estimate of his powers. Perhaps he never intended it to survive, so that its preservation is merely due to chance. At the same time, though its Latinity is hardly worthy of his fame, it does not deserve to be styled "bombastic and obscure"<sup>1</sup>; nor is it fair to say that it is little superior to "the pedantic declamations customary at the Universities."<sup>2</sup> Certainly the orator has divided his remarks into numbered headings, as in old-fashioned sermons; but he does this merely for the sake of clearness and as a concession to his audience. He says much upon the essential value of poetry, which is more suited to the taste of his own day than of ours; and his main object is a defence of the ceremony as an honour done to a noble branch of literary art rather than as a personal tribute to himself.

He takes for his text a passage in Virgil's third *Georgic*:<sup>3</sup>

"A rapturous charm there is that seizes me  
And takes me o'er Parnassus' lonely steeps."

The speaker excuses himself for taking a text from Virgil instead of from Scripture, because he is to discourse of poetry rather than of theology. He invokes, however, the aid of the Holy Virgin, whose ardent votary he is, by an opening recitation of the "Ave Maria." First he has to speak of the difficulties of his art (the "lonely steeps" of the poet), then of the rapture which conquers them, lastly of the rewards that await success. There are three reasons for the arduousness of his quest; first, that the art—unlike others—requires not merely diligence and industry, but a divine gift from above; secondly (and this is personal to himself), that fortune has placed obstacles in his way from his earliest years; thirdly, that such studies are despised in his own day, though under the early Empire they were more highly favoured, but only for a short time. Men might well ask whence he found the confidence in himself needful for so toilsome an ascent. He can only reply, "in the rapture of the pursuit," in which he was

<sup>1</sup> Gregorovius (*loc. cit.*), p. 212, n.

<sup>2</sup> G. Voigt, *Wiederbelebung*, I. p. 127.

<sup>3</sup> *Georg.* III. 291:

"Sed me Parnassi deserta per ardua dulcis  
Raptat amor."

My version is adapted from the prose rendering by Conington (*Misc. Works*, II. p. 85).



encouraged by three high motives—zeal for the honour of the State, eagerness for personal fame and a desire to incite others to similar action. It is for the glory of the Roman State—the mistress of all lands—to reward poetic merit. He rejoices that an ancient custom—obsolete for more than 1,200 years—is to be revived in his own person for the encouragement of talent, especially when he thinks of the many poets in ancient times, who were formerly so honoured. That is why, when faced with the choice between Rome and Paris, he unhesitatingly preferred Rome; as Virgil well says, “the love of country prevailed.”<sup>1</sup> As to his eagerness for fame, he is not ashamed to admit it, for it is a common failing; but he also honestly desires fame as a spur to later workers in the same field. The toilers in so arduous a quest need a leader, and he has boldly offered himself in this capacity; he knows many men of great learning and ability, especially in Italy, who shrink diffidently from climbing “the lonely steeps.” As to any powers of his own, he freely admits that they are all God’s gift; but with His aid, and from the motives above-mentioned, he has faced the task. What are the characteristics and conditions of poetic success? Lactantius says<sup>2</sup> that a poet should veil physical, moral, and historical facts under the guise of fiction, and present them allegorically so as to lead men to higher things. That does not mean, as the vulgar suppose, that the poet is a fool and a liar. No. He (the speaker) is often wont to represent the difference between poetry and history or philosophy as like that between a clouded and a clear sky. In the former the sunlight is there all the same, but it looks different to the beholder’s eye. And so, because men take most pleasure in what is hardest to find, poetry is all the sweeter for the hidden truth which it conceals; and to such a poet comes the reward of renown and the immortality of his name. The great practical benefit which he confers is the preservation of great names from oblivion; many truly great men have been forgotten for want of a poet to celebrate them. And this leads him to show, in conclusion, why the laurel is the proper distinction for poets. Its strong smell is a symbol of a noble fame; and so the laurel befits both princes and poets, for

<sup>1</sup> *Æneid*, VI. 823.

<sup>2</sup> *Institutes*. Lib. I. In a fifteenth-century MS. possessed by Rossetti this passage is quoted as expressing the view of the “laureate poet” (*Hortis (op. cit.)*, p. 30).

both strive after glory—the former by bodily and spiritual bravery, the latter by intellectual. Other reasons are that the laurel gives shade and repose after toil, and that its leaves preserve books and other objects from decay. It is commonly said that he who sleeps under the laurel will have dreams that come true; this should be so with poets, for the tree is sacred to Apollo—the god of poets. It is also a fit symbol of immortality, for it is evergreen and cannot be struck by lightning. Finally, the speaker prays the people that he may be decorated with laurel, unworthy though he be, since he has been recommended for the honour by King Robert, the prodigy of learning.

To us perhaps many of these ideas sound fanciful, even puerile; but they were not unsuited to such of the audience as could understand them. We wonder how large a proportion that might be—how many, for instance, of the listeners had heard of Parnassus, or even of Apollo. Yet it was a skilful appeal on behalf of the higher studies to the greatness of the Roman past, of which the Romans of those days were the more proud because they understood little about it. They expected something new on so novel an occasion, and they were not disappointed. In the form of the speech there is the ring of the mediæval dialectic; each point of the speaker's argument is clinched by a learned quotation which is meant to settle it. But the authors cited are not Aristotle, or Peter Lombard, or Aquinas; they are Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Lucan, Juvenal, Statius, Lactantius, Cicero—names which were some of them household words, though the works which they represented had not been seriously studied.

“ This man (they would think), must be very learned, for he knows all about the ancient Romans, and has even read what they wrote. And what a grand idea of poetry—teaching truth by means of fiction! So those old pagan poets were not all liars; they meant to say something worth hearing, if one only had the wit to puzzle it out.”

The supposed necessity of finding an allegorical meaning in the ancient poets, which to us seems so futile, had a potent attraction for the mediæval mind. Petrarch is not above his age in this respect. We see in his *Eclogues* how he strove to meet this requirement; he would scarcely have been displeased with the notion, which became widely prevalent, that “ Laura ” stood for

poetry or philosophy or fame, and not for any real person. He interprets Virgil frequently in the same way. The "destruction of Troy" is our short human life—troubled and soon to vanish like the figment of a dream. The "cave of Æolus" represents the war of conflicting passions in the heart. In the *Secret* he unfolds these ideas to the Saint with his full concurrence; but the modern man peeps out when the latter suggests a faint doubt whether Virgil really meant all this as he wrote, and not simply an actual storm at sea.<sup>1</sup>

The authenticity of Petrarch's speech as written for the ceremony, if not then fully delivered, has not been impugned. It clearly stands upon the same footing as the *Privilegium Laureæ* or official certificate, which has been much longer before the world, though once thought by some to be spurious.<sup>2</sup> The two documents mutually corroborate each other; for it is manifest that the *Privilegium* was composed immediately after the ceremony by some scribe, who had the speech before him. The poet's arguments are there shortly summarized as providing the reasons which induced the Senators to confer the distinction upon him. The sentences are long, and the phraseology legal, but the source of the ideas is now patent enough. The Senators assert that as there are two roads to glory—through the mind and through the body, so the Almighty has for ever placed the leadership in both in the hands of their most glorious city. As regards the former in particular, Rome has produced illustrious historians and poets, by whom the names and characters of the old Romans have been perpetuated. And for want of them, in the times succeeding the first Empire, the deeds of many great men have fallen into oblivion with the result that, strange to say, we know more of the most ancient than of their successors. It was therefore a right custom in ancient Rome to reward both Cæsars and poets with the laurel crown. Yet now the office of poet is so little known among us that some consider them mere feigners and liars; whereas the wisest men have told us that Poetry should depict truth (*virtutem rei*) under a pleasing veil and in melodious and eloquent song, which is the more delightful for its abstruse significance. That ancient custom has lain long in abeyance; but now the gifted Francesco Petrarca of Florence,

<sup>1</sup> *Secretum*, Dial. II. (B. ed. p. 396).

<sup>2</sup> Hortis (*op. cit.*), p. 8.



well versed in such studies from his childhood, desired to receive the laurel in this city, and has shown his fervent love of Rome by preferring to receive it here, though invited elsewhere. He has admitted before the Roman people that he wished for it not merely for his own glory but in order to incite others to similar studies ; but he would not come to Rome till he had been approved by the judgment of the illustrious King Robert. Wherefore—the Senators go on to declare—relying on commendatory letters under the King's seal and on the trustworthy bearers of them, and on public fame which gives the same witness, but much more on the evidence of the works of the aforesaid Francesco,<sup>1</sup> they pronounce him a great poet and historian, distinguish him as a " Master," especially in poetry, and have this day laid a laurel crown upon his head. They give him licence to read and interpret old writings and new, and to compose books and poems of his own in both these departments of study in Rome—" the head and mistress of all cities and lands "—or wherever else he pleased ; on solemn public occasions to bear a crown of laurel, myrtle or ivy at his choice ; and to wear the poetic dress. They judge his future writings to be worthy of all the privileges and honours generally accorded to those of the Professors of the liberal Arts—all the more because the rarity of his profession <sup>2</sup> makes him the worthier of this distinction. Moreover, for his high gifts and his extreme devotion to Rome, shown both in word and act, they grant him the Roman citizenship and all the rights pertaining thereto ; and to this grant the Roman people assented by acclamation without a dissentient voice. In proof thereof the Senators have signed the present deed, and have ordered to be appended to it their golden Bull.

We may be sure that for this grant of citizenship, if for no other reason, Petrarch would regard the document as his most precious treasure ; and it is to be regretted that though so many of his books have survived to our day, the original of this patent with its golden Bull, which would have been priceless to an Italian Museum, has perished. It shows us that the ceremony had not merely a sentimental, but a practical side. It was equivalent to an honorary degree, solemnly conferred by the

<sup>1</sup> It is a pity that these works are not specified. P. owed his crowning to the report that he had written the *Africa*, but the Senators had certainly not seen it.

<sup>2</sup> *Privilegium* (B. ed.), p. 1256.

Senate and conveying all the more distinction that it was without precedent ; and it raised its recipient to the status of a University teacher, which he might have turned to financial profit, if he had been so inclined. The citizenship was an additional honour, which he of all men knew how to prize ; and its possession, it must be admitted, excuses much that seems wayward and ungrateful to his patrons in his after conduct towards the revolution of Rienzi. It meant a great deal for the future that, in those days of brute force and unscrupulous cunning, the Roman Republic, though rent with strife and faction, should devote a day to the honour of a gentle poet.

How long Petrarch remained in Rome after his triumph he does not tell us ; all that we know for certain is that with Azzo and other companions, among whom was a courtier deputed by Robert to attend the ceremony, he had arrived at Pisa after an adventurous journey before the end of April.<sup>1</sup> In writing a short note <sup>2</sup> to Barbato on the 30th, he says that the party fell into the hands of brigands in the Campagna just outside Rome ; and though they recovered their liberty, they were obliged to retreat into the city. The incident caused a great " stir " in Rome ; and the next day a sufficient guard was provided, under whose escort they travelled in safety. There were other mischances on the journey, which would take about four days <sup>3</sup> ; and for an account of these Petrarch refers Barbato to the bearer of the letter. Such was the contrast between the triumph of the poet and the sordid realities of fourteenth-century life ; and a historian remarks <sup>4</sup> that Petrarch might solace himself with the thought of the Emperors—at least with the two of his own time—who were treated with contempt when the ceremony of their coronation was over.

On the same date and by the same messenger the poet wrote a letter of acknowledgment <sup>5</sup> to the King for the signal favour

<sup>1</sup> De Sade states (II. 7) that he arrived at Pisa on April 20 ; and he is followed by Levati (ii. 44) and Fracassetti (*It.* i. p. 171, "Chronologia"). But de Sade apparently read the date of the two next letters as "XI. Kal. Mai" (*i.e.* 21st) in the Paris MSS., while Fracassetti (I. 219) (relying on the Passioneian MS.) reads "II. Kal." (30th). I follow the latter, though by no means sure that he is correct, especially as he gives the date 29th.

<sup>2</sup> *F.* IV. 8.

<sup>3</sup> See for length of journey *Ep. Metr.* II. xvi.

<sup>4</sup> Gregorovius (*loc. cit.*), p. 217, n.

<sup>5</sup> *F.* IV. 7—translated in full at the end of this chapter, pp. 154-156.

granted to him. It is full of the compliments which he so well knew how to pay ; it also betrays a consciousness that his title to the laurel rested not so much upon his past merits as upon the expectation of future achievement. He is profoundly sensible of the difficulties that lay before him and all others fired with the same ambition. He does not utter, as has been absurdly asserted,<sup>1</sup> " a peevish complaint against the excessive love of the classics in his own day "—a charge which he would have been the last to bring against his contemporaries. His protest is against the doctrine that poetry is dead and buried, and incapable of revival. Nor does he complacently dwell upon his new distinction as proof to the contrary ; he is content to say, in the true spirit of a pioneer, " Let us hope and work and believe in success, and it will come." This is indeed evidence of a new spirit in literature, which carries with it the splendid promise of the Renaissance.

It has been justly remarked that the crowning of Petrarch " although unimportant in itself "—as he admits in the first flush of his triumph<sup>2</sup>—" yet left behind an enduring impression owing to the city where it took place and the ideas which it embodied and to which it gave utterance."<sup>3</sup> Whatever the personal motives which made him so ardently desire it, his insistence upon the Capitol for its scene amounted to a stroke of genius ; it changed the ceremony from an ordinary town festivity to an event of historic significance. In seeking a public recognition of his fame in Rome, he was building an edifice for the future, and he knew it. At that time the Eternal City, notwithstanding its desertion by the Popes, was still in the eyes of all men the centre of the Universe. It was fitting that a solemnity which symbolized the revival of the old culture and the inauguration of a new, should take place within its walls. Petrarch's dim consciousness of this fact exalts his conduct from mere self-seeking into a strong and generous aspiration.<sup>4</sup> The crown was granted, as the official diploma implies, not merely to the poet, but to the scholar and historian—to " the high priest of learning, who had first read with full understanding the writings of antiquity " <sup>5</sup> and was to interpret them to his own age. It was

<sup>1</sup> Campbell, *Life of Petrarch*, I. 215.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *F.* IV. 7 (below, p. 154).

<sup>3</sup> Gregorovius, Vol. VI. pt. i. p. 216.

<sup>4</sup> Hortis (*op. cit.*), p. 4, and Bartoli (*F. P.*, Florence, 1884), p. 39.

<sup>5</sup> Koerting (*op. cit.*), p. 177.



known that Petrarch had begun a poem in celebration of the palmy days of republican Rome ; and this was alone enough to make all Italy hail him as her poet. For it was among the deeply rooted convictions of the time that her splendid past was her greatest title to glory. The contrast between Dante and Petrarch may be clearly seen in their attitude towards the laurel crown.<sup>1</sup> Dante, whose work was in the language of the day, would receive it nowhere else but in commercial Florence, in the "bel San Giovanni" of his baptism ; he would certainly have been crowned there, according to his desire, but for the virulence of political hatred. Petrarch, whose enthusiasm was for ancient history and for the glories of the republic, deliberately chose Rome. It is characteristic of the century whose ideals lay in the past that the one, with a far higher title, was baulked of his ambition and lay in an exile's grave ; while the other, whose Latin poem is now almost forgotten, received the honour amidst universal applause. After their time, through the action of the Teutonic Emperors, the ceremony became too cheap and frequent to attract attention. A hundred years later (1444) Florence crowned her great humanist, Lionardo Bruni of Arezzo, as he lay on his funeral bier ; but except the theatrical self-crowning of Rienzi, there was no other notable coronation in Rome. After two centuries and a half (March and April, 1595) great preparations were made for the crowning of another epic poet, Torquato Tasso, on the Capitol. The ceremony was to have been performed by Pope Clement VIII. in person ; but death snatched away the poet before the wreath could be bestowed.

Tasso was to have received the laurel at the height of his fame, when through the press his vernacular poem had long been on the lips of thousands. Petrarch, on the other hand, received it—not without solicitation and by the help of powerful friends—chiefly as an encouragement for labours still to come. The responsibility was a heavy one, and he was soon to feel its weight<sup>2</sup> ; but for the moment his confidence was unbounded. Although regarding the honour, as we have said, as a tribute to "the abandoned Muses"—to the long neglected studies that he loved,

<sup>1</sup> A. Carlini, *Studio sul Africa*, p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the line "Magnus enim labor est magnæ custodia famæ" (*Africa*, VII. 292), which he liked so well that he repeated it in a letter to the Cardinal (*Ep. Metr.* II. xv. 273). It is quoted also in a letter to Rienzi (*F.* VII. 7, *Frac.* I. 372).

he yet valued it personally as gratifying the two strongest feelings of his nature—his ideal passion for “Laura” and his love of Roman antiquity. As to the first, he felt all the fervour of a knight of chivalry in receiving a wreath of honour, whose material recalled the adored name of his lady. In the *Secret* St. Augustine charges him with this as the climax of his folly; and the poet admits sorrowfully that his words are taken from “the very book of human experience.”<sup>1</sup> Moreover, three years after this confession he composed an Eclogue,<sup>2</sup> in which he feigned that he had received the wreath from the lady’s own hand; and he no doubt considered this as at least metaphorically true, for he had already asserted that he owed entirely to her whatever renown and glory he had attained.<sup>3</sup> But even in this Eclogue he makes his lady recount the classical associations of the Capitol before placing the wreath upon his head; and in the last book of the *Africa*, which he wrote soon after at Parma while the leaves of his laurel were still green, it is the revival in his own person of this custom of ancient Rome which inspires the conclusion of the poem. This introduction of his own personality in the prophetic dream of Ennius<sup>4</sup> must appear to modern eyes as a ludicrous piece of egotism, conceived in the worst taste. Evidently, for the time at least, Petrarch was “exalted above measure” by the glitter of his Capitoline honour. I suspect that his subsequent consciousness of this mistake, which he had not the courage to correct, had something to do with his unwillingness to publish the poem.

With time, of course, came the inevitable disillusion. As has been truly said, he soon found that his new crown “bore painful thorns.”<sup>5</sup> Even in the first month his sensitive soul became conscious that he had exposed himself to the shafts of envy<sup>6</sup>; and at some time in the next ten years a nameless calumniator

<sup>1</sup> *Secretum* (B. ed.), p. 403.

<sup>2</sup> *Ecl.* III. 162, 163. Daphne is plainly “Laura” (as l. 52, referring to the coronation, clearly shows) in spite of the false assertion of the commentators that she stands for Poetry. So, too, in the beautiful but obscure Canzone XII. the wreath was presented by a lady, who even if standing allegorically for Glory, was yet primarily “Laura.”

<sup>3</sup> *Secretum* (B. ed.), p. 400.

<sup>4</sup> *Africa*, Lib. IX. 216–283. Ennius relates to Scipio a dream in which Homer had appeared and foretold the poem of P. in the general’s honour, the laurel-crown and even the *De Viris Illustribus*.

<sup>5</sup> Koerting (*op. cit.*), p. 183.

<sup>6</sup> See the letter to King Robert, *F.* IV. 7 (below, p. 156). But he had already anticipated it in *F.* IV. 6 (see above, p. 123).

sent him verses ridiculing the laurel crown and his personal pretensions to it. The more dignified course would have been to ignore such scribblers; but that was not possible to a man of his temper. He wrote a vituperative reply, in which he hints a doubt whether it might not have been better to wander unknown among the woods and rocks of his Helicon.<sup>1</sup> In his later writings his repentance became explicit and complete. In the *Letter to Posterity* he says that he received the honour "while still a raw scholar," and that his mature judgment does not approve the affectionate and partial verdict of the King. In the *Triumph of Love*, written in the decline of life, he says, speaking of his friends:

"With them I used (too early) to adorn  
My head with the honoured branches, only worn  
For her dear sake I did so deeply love,  
Who filled my thoughts; but ah! I daily prove  
Nor fruit nor leaves from thence can gathered be;  
The root hath sharp and bitter been to me."<sup>2</sup>

In one of his latest letters,<sup>3</sup> written when he was verging on his seventieth year, he is even more outspoken:

"That laurel came to me with its leaves immature, when I was not ripe for it in age or mind; and if I had been older, I should not have desired it. For young men, unlike the old, prefer the showy to the useful and look not to the end. That laurel brought me no knowledge, nor yet eloquence, but an infinity of envy which robbed me of my repose. Thus I paid the penalty for my empty glory and youthful audacity. From that time almost all men whetted their tongues and pens against me; I had even to stand armed cap-à-pie and meet attacks from right and left; my friends were turned by envy into foes. This, in short, was the fruit of my laurel—that I became well known and much harassed; without it I could have lived—what some think the best kind of life—in obscurity and repose."

"Young men look not to the end." So argued our stern moralist of the eighteenth century, when on seeing

"The young enthusiast quit his ease for fame."

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<sup>1</sup> *Ep. Metr.* II. xi. 49-52. Yet he still calls it "a very rare distinction—sought in his own day by himself alone" (ll. 6, 7).

<sup>2</sup> *Trionfo d'Amore*, Part III. (Mestica), ll. 79-84 (Macgregor's translation).

<sup>3</sup> *Sen.* XVII. 2 (Frac.) to Boccaccio, probably written in April, 1373 (B. ed. p. 1069).



he bade him pause and think what awaits him, even if he pass scatheless through all the snares and temptations of a life of letters :

“ Yet hope not life from grief and danger free,  
Nor think the doom of men reversed for thee ;  
Deign on the passing world to turn thine eyes  
And pause awhile from letters, to be wise ;  
There mark what ills the scholar's life assail,  
Toil, Envy, Want, the Patron and the Jail.  
See nations, slowly wise and meanly just  
To buried merit raise the tardy bust.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Johnson's *Vanity of Human Wishes*, ll. 153-160.

## LETTERS

### F. IV. 6.

*F. P. to Giacomo Colonna, Bishop of Lombez*

“ To-day—and not for the first time—I am learning the tricks of Fortune. She not only attacks, but scatters and divides us, so that we may not be a support to each other in joy and sorrow. She has long known the cares consuming my soul, for which none but yourself could provide a remedy. That is why, by a strange concatenation of causes, I found on my return from the North that you, the one mitigator of my troubles, had been carried off. Consequently, although you had gone to Rome, the common heritage of yourself and the world—and to me, above all, for its own sake and for yours, at that time doubly an object of desire, yet the difficulty of following you kept me gloomy and dejected ; and the result was that while everywhere I fancied myself in exile without you, in the ardour of my love and anxiety, I envied Rome your presence and you Rome’s ; and so, since Fortune held my youthful heart in leash, the few years of our mutual separation seemed to me so many ages. At length I came, as you saw, amid the thunders of war, winter and the waves ; for affection of course crushes every difficulty, and as Virgil <sup>1</sup> puts it :

“ My love the perilous road o’erpassed ; ”

and while my eyes were on the look-out for your venerable and longed-for presence, no nausea of the sea was felt by my stomach (though naturally most subject to it), no hardship of frost or climate by my body, no threat of danger by my mind. On you, then, my journey was set with my whole soul, so that thinking of you only, I was scarcely conscious of things about me, and when I had found you, I lost all memory of the long voyage.

“ And now Fortune has played me the same trick, though in the reverse way—so that, when I am off for Rome, you are in Gascony and the regions of the West ; and we are as far as possible apart, when I specially longed for your company, who are the ornament of all my renown. But that is the way with mortal wishes—that what we desire most ardently we attain to with regret. But in order that you may actually be there with me in spirit, let me tell you that I am starting this very day in

<sup>1</sup> *Æn.* VI. 688 (Conington’s translation).

quest of the Delphic laurel.<sup>1</sup> That honour,<sup>2</sup> which was once the special and peculiar desire of famous Cæsars and sacred poets, but is to-day either despised or ignored, has given me many sleepless nights. I have often discussed it with you ; and now, when two such great places as Rome and Paris—one the queen of cities and capital of the world, the other the nurse of the studies of our age—have vied in inviting my humble self, I have finally decided, after much deliberation and on the strong advice and persuasion of your brother, to receive it nowhere but at Rome, over the ashes of the ancient poets and in the place of their abode. For this a good deal of time is needed. The King must be visited and Naples seen ; thence I must journey to Rome, and I presume I shall spend some days there. In short, unless my reckoning be at fault, the ceremony will take place on Easter Day (April 8) on the Capitol. . . .”

F. IV. 7.

*F. P. to Robert, King of Sicily*

“ The world has long known, most noble King, how much you have done for liberal and honourable studies, of which—if I mistake not—you have purposely made yourself king by a title more splendid than the diadem of your temporal realm. And you have but now laid the abandoned Muses under a new obligation in giving a solemn recognition to my powers, small as they are. For this end you have bedecked the city of Rome and the old palace of the Capitol with a new kind of garland and with joy unlooked for. Perhaps some one will say that this is but a small affair—yet it is certainly conspicuous for its novelty and honoured by the applause and delight of the Roman People. In this restoration of the custom<sup>3</sup> of the laurel—not merely intermitted for many ages, but altogether forgotten while very different cares and studies prevailed in the Republic—you have been the general, and I the common soldier. I know men of the highest gifts, both in Italy and abroad, who have only been deterred from the attempt by its long disuse and by the suspicion attaching to novelty ; and I trust—now that they have laid the peril on my shoulders—that they will shortly follow in my wake

<sup>1</sup> Gibbon (VIII. 226, n. 11) says that P. was “ ignorant ” that the laurel was not the Capitoline, but the Delphic crown ; yet here he uses the latter term.

<sup>2</sup> The original here has a portentous periphrasis of eleven lines, which I have split up into separate sentences. I suspect that it was a clumsy insertion of 1359 ; for the Bishop, even if at Lombez before September, 1340, must have heard from P. about the laurel long before February.

<sup>3</sup> The “ *morem* ” of the Paris MS. is better than Fracassetti’s “ *nomen*.”



and pluck the Roman laurel by rivalry in study. Who can delay, or fear to commence the march under the auspices of Robert? It is a delight to be the first in such an army, of which I should think it not inglorious to be the last. I confess that I should have been unequal to the burden, had not your favour given me strength and courage. Would that you could have adorned the festal day with your most serene presence! You used often to say that if your age had not forbidden it, your royal dignity should never have stood in the way.

"I have seen many signs that you greatly admire the character of Augustus; and in this especially—that to Horace, who had at first opposed him,<sup>1</sup> he showed himself not only reconciled, but kind and friendly, and that in appreciating the genius of Virgil, he did not despise his plebeian origin. It was nobly done. What can be less royal than to demand an adventitious nobility in those who are commended by their virtue and talent, so long as true nobility be not wanting, and you can yourself ennoble them? Yet I do not ignore the reply made to this by the learned of our own day—a proud and unenterprising race. 'Virgil and Horace,' they say, 'are dead and buried; it is vain to use high-flown language about them. We once had excellent men; not so long ago we had some decent ones; now we have sunk to the lowest dregs!' There is a saying of Plautus,<sup>2</sup> which I fancy applies less to his own age (with its little experience) than to ours—'At that time,' he says, 'there was a blooming of poets, which has now gone the way of all the earth.' Far more justly might we make the complaint; for those whose death we should most deplore, had not then arisen. Yet the object of our 'decriers' is most unfair. It is not that they deplore the decease of the sciences—which they *wish* to have dead and buried—but that they may drive their own contemporaries to despair, whom they have no power to copy. Let them, then, give way to despair, but let us be encouraged; where they see but shackles and restraints, let us find a spur and an impulse to become that of which they deny the existence, except under the halo of antiquity. I grant that we are a small and select band; but why should not a few prevail? If all are to be deterred by small numbers, there will soon be none. Let us strive and hope on; we shall perhaps succeed. It is Virgil who says:

'They can, because they think they can';<sup>3</sup>

we too shall be able, if we have faith in our ability. Does not Plautus bewail the loss of his own age, perhaps in the death of

<sup>1</sup> May not this be a covert allusion to the Ghibellinism of Petracco, and to P.'s hereditary sympathy with it?

<sup>2</sup> The *Casina*, Prol. 18, 19.

<sup>3</sup> *Æn.* V. 231, "Possunt, quia posse videntur." (Conington's translation.)

Ennius or Nævius? Yet the time of Virgil and Horace was not just to their transcendent genius. The former, a poet of divine spirit, was ceaselessly vexed by rivals throughout life and defamed as a plunderer of other men's works; the latter was reproached for seeming to be but a faint admirer of the ancients. It has always been, and will ever be, the case that reverence attaches to antiquity, envy to the work of contemporaries.

"With you, best of kings and highest of philosophers and poets, the practice of Augustus, as described by Suetonius,<sup>1</sup> of fostering in every way the talent of his time, has become a settled principle, as I have heard you claim. You not only do that, but treat such men with all possible courtesy and gentleness. I speak from experience; like him, 'you listen kindly and patiently to readings not merely of poems and histories, but of speeches and dialogues.' Yet you are 'offended if aught be written about yourself, unless in a serious spirit and by the best writers.' In all this you are a follower of Augustus; and you show no favour to those who despise everything but masterpieces impossible to rival. It is a singular and undeserved fortune, both lately of myself, and often before of many others, to have met with so gracious a reception<sup>2</sup> from such a man. Nor, as I have remarked, would your royal condescension have stopped there, if your age had not been so advanced, or Rome been more accessible. However, your Majesty's messenger who represented you throughout, will tell you by word of mouth of our experiences both of joy and peril, whether at Rome or after our departure. Finally, I shall never forget your last injunction to me "to return as soon as possible"; for I am charmed—God is my witness—by the splendour, not of your royal court, but of your talents. From you I look for a different kind of endowment than men generally expect from kings. My prayer is that the King of kings and Lord of lords, Who is the Source of life, may prolong the years of yours, and may at length transfer you from this mortal throne to one that is eternal.

*"Pisa, April 30."*

<sup>1</sup> Suet. Oct. c. 89. Throughout this letter (but not always) P. speaks in mediæval wise of "Maro," "Flaccus" and "Tranquillus." I have substituted the "nomina" as more intelligible to-day.

<sup>2</sup> I have followed the "ornatus" of the Paris MS. rather than the "hortatus" of Fracassetti, which he translates as if it were passive.

## CHAPTER XV

### AT PARMA AND AVIGNON (1341-1343)

#### THE "AFRICA"

WE left Petrarch at Pisa on April 30, 1341, and if we are to believe de Sade,<sup>1</sup> he was then anxious to proceed to Avignon and lay his newly won wreath (metaphorically) at the feet of his lady. Had this been the case, there was nothing to hinder his taking ship from Pisa or Genoa to Marseilles or crossing the Alps by Monte Ginevra to Dauphiné and Provence. But in the following month we find him on the other side of the Apennines in the plain of the Po—far out of the direct route to his Transalpine abode. He had been for some months in the company of Azzo da Correggio, and at least knew of his intention to liberate his native city of Parma from his nephew Mastino della Scala, the lord of Verona. We can hardly imagine Petrarch assisting at a popular rising; but plainly Azzo must have persuaded him to come to Parma and see the result of his attempt, which was now ripe for execution. If Azzo went with him to Pisa,<sup>2</sup> he probably left him there in order to pay a flying visit to Florence and secretly induce the Signory to countenance his plans.<sup>3</sup> It would be easy to arrange a date and place for the friends to meet three weeks later in the neighbourhood of Parma. Petrarch has been blamed for his friendship with this unscrupulous conspirator, who was now scheming to supplant his own relative and former employer. Certainly Azzo was the least reputable of his friends; but before condemning Petrarch, we need to take a dispassionate view of the character and career of Azzo.

<sup>1</sup> T. II. p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> As we gather he did from *F.* IV. 8, of April 30 (to Barbato)—“ego cum his qui me terrâ et pelago secuti erant.”

<sup>3</sup> Villani is apparently the authority for de Sade's statement that Azzo passed eight days in secret conference with the Signory at Mugello near Florence, but could not persuade them to give him open support (Sismondi, *Hist. des Rep. Ital.* IV. 164).



He was the third of the four sons of Ghiberto da Correggio, who had been lord of Parma early in the century and whose perfidy towards his fellow-despot of Piacenza was related in the first chapter.<sup>1</sup> Thus Azzo had a hereditary proclivity towards tortuous and "shady" methods, which was exemplified also in that son of his sister, against whom his machinations were now to be directed. But we are not, therefore, to suppose him destitute of that civic patriotism which was apt to distinguish the best of the "tyrants." It is quite conceivable that he had a genuine love for his native city, and that in supporting the rule of his nephew he came to realize, in Lord Salisbury's phrase, that he had "put his money on the wrong horse." Mastino, as we have seen,<sup>2</sup> had endeavoured to carve out for himself a large principality in the north of Italy and in the attempt had come to the very verge of ruin. But his failure in 1339 had not taught him to restrain his ambition. He was always at war, and drained his subject-cities of men and money. The Veronese governor of Parma, Benedetto da Malvicina, was indolent and did not trouble himself to repress the excesses of the powerful, though he kept down the people with an iron hand. There was thus great misery in Parma; trade languished, taxes were oppressive, and many of the poor died of famine. It is true that the Correggi were supposed to be the lieutenants of their nephew; but they held no civic office, and Azzo was a frequent absentee through his various missions to other courts on Mastino's behalf. It is said that the first breach between them occurred in 1339, when Azzo took an oath at Avignon in Mastino's name that he would acknowledge the overlordship of the Pope, and then found his nephew by no means disposed to abide by the compact.<sup>3</sup>

Possibly this disagreement was only a pretext for Azzo's change of policy; it may be that he was weary of acting as Mastino's underling, and resolved to fight for his own hand. Though not the eldest, he was much the most capable of the four brothers, and had been educated for an ecclesiastical career.

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. I. p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 409.

<sup>3</sup> F. Berlan, *Parma liberata dal giogo di Mastino della Scala*, add. 21 Maggio 1341; *Canzone politica di F. P.* etc. Bologna, 1870, in *Scelta di curiosità inedite e rare*, 109. I am much indebted to this essay, though I do not always agree with its conclusions.

Like Petrarch, he was a tonsured clerk ; and at the time of his missions to Avignon,<sup>1</sup> he was already Provost of the church of San Donnino and a canon of Parma. He was a man of lively talent and unusual culture, devoted to reading and eager for knowledge—a fact which accounts for the mutual attraction between him and Petrarch. The poet speaks of his extraordinary memory in which he was “second to none,” and adds that this gift stood him in good stead in the few intervals of leisure, which he could steal from public affairs.<sup>2</sup> His bodily strength was such that he was nicknamed “Bronze-foot”—possibly by Petrarch himself<sup>3</sup> ; and this union of physical with mental endowments makes him typical of the early Renaissance. But perhaps ambition was his ruling passion. The humdrum tenure of Church sinecures did not satisfy his restless nature ; and after his second visit to Avignon he married (February 8, 1340) Tommasina Gonzaga, daughter of Lodovico, lord of Mantua and sister of Petrarch’s admirer Guido. This match was the means of forwarding his schemes against Mastino ; for the Gonzaghi—like the despots of Ferrara and Padua—were jealous of the encroachments of Verona.

Azzo might have fomented a revolt in Parma at least a year before he actually did so. But he was at heart an aristocrat, and put no confidence in the people, who might at any moment turn round and expel him ; he “preferred to be indebted to his equals rather than to his inferiors.”<sup>4</sup> He believed in the maxim quoted by Machiavelli<sup>5</sup> that “he who builds upon the people builds upon the sand.” The supreme art of the Italian despot was to get the people to call him in at the moment most convenient to himself, and then maintain himself by the help of external allies. During the past year, as already related,<sup>6</sup> he had been busy in procuring support for his intended enterprise. He laid

<sup>1</sup> In 1335 and 1338. See Vol. I. p. 407, and Chap. XIII. p. 80. Fracassetti (*It.* V. 273) strangely supposes from the terms of *Var.* 19 (to Moggi of Parma) that Azzo accompanied P. on his long journey of 1337. If he met him in Rome, he may have done so ; but P.’s words are entirely general—perhaps exaggerated—and need only refer to the journey of 1341.

<sup>2</sup> Preface to *De Rem. Utr. Fort.* (dedicated to Azzo), B. ed. p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> I do not know that there is any authority for the name except the same Preface (B. ed. p. 4), where the reminiscence suggests, though not certainly, that the name was of P.’s choosing. The word “Æripes” in the sense of “strong” occurs in Ausonius, *Idylls*, xi. 14.

<sup>4</sup> Berlan (*op. cit.*), p. 26.

<sup>5</sup> *Il Principe*, cap. ix.

<sup>6</sup> See above, p. 124.

his foundations broad and deep. He was assured of the goodwill of Ubertino da Carrara, lord of Padua; and his wife's family at Mantua promised to furnish troops. He obtained a similar promise from Mastino's sworn enemy, Luchino Visconti of Milan, on the condition—probably a dead secret between the parties—that after four years he would resign the lordship of Parma to Luchino. It is impossible to believe that he really meant to observe this compact. His crafty plan was to secure the city by the help of the Ghibellines and maintain himself there by means of the Guelfs, if the Ghibelline Visconti claimed their prize. With this object he went to Avignon to obtain the consent of the Pope, which was apparently accorded in the belief that he would prove a more pliant tool in the Church's hands than his formidable nephew. With the same purpose in view he visited King Robert in company with Petrarch and seems to have secured his acquiescence, if the Signory at Florence made no objection. The citizens of the Republic had never forgiven Mastino for his breach of faith with them in refusing to surrender Lucca. But they perhaps foresaw—what actually happened—that if Mastino lost Parma, which was a necessary link between his states and Lucca, he would be willing to resign the latter city to them for a price. Had they been more enterprising and attacked it immediately after the Parma revolt, they might have had it for nothing; but they were aware that this would mean war with Pisa, which was in fact caused by the mere rumour of the proposed sale.

Of Azzo's secret bargain with Luchino the people of Parma knew nothing, nor probably did our poet himself. It was only revealed by the subsequent course of events and was carefully concealed from his Guelf allies. But Petrarch and Cardinal Colonna were both in the secret of Azzo's plot against his nephew; and it seems strange that Mastino—who must have been aware of Azzo's hostility, for he had forbidden his return to Parma<sup>1</sup>—should not have done more to prevent the rising. The other three brothers were allowed to remain in the city, probably under strict surveillance;<sup>2</sup> and Mastino may have thought that they

<sup>1</sup> P. expressly states this in *F.* IV. 9 (below, p. 163, *Frac.* I. 220)—“unde, (from Parma) ut scis, arcebamur”—so that even the Cardinal at Avignon was aware of Azzo's banishment.

<sup>2</sup> Sismondi's statement (IV. 163) that they held Parma as a fief from Mastino is incorrect and misleading.



were harmless, when separated from the most capable member of the fraternity. When Azzo is described as a "traitor" to his Veronese relative,<sup>1</sup> it is on the assumption, which we have seen to be unfounded, that the latter was unaware of his change of policy. In the tangled skein of Italian politics quarrels between members of the same family were of daily occurrence, and even the austere Benedict XII. saw no shame in lending countenance to the uncle's conspiracy against his nephew. Petrarch was not likely to be more scrupulous; and in his zeal for popular liberties would have regarded the end as justifying the means. Whether he would have approved of the transference of the newly freed Parmese behind their backs to the Milanese tyrant is a more difficult question. His view might have been affected—indefensibly, of course, from an ethical standpoint—by the probability of the arrangement falling through. Machiavelli's dictum that a "prince is not bound to keep his word, if to do so is prejudicial to his own interests,"<sup>2</sup> represents the settled practice of the next two centuries, and though revolting to our moral sense, has found august imitators in the twentieth century. At least, when reviewing twenty years later the calamities which had befallen Azzo,<sup>3</sup> Petrarch makes it no reproach against him that he had brought them upon himself by his tortuous policy. He was not so generous to Rienzi, when failure was writ large upon his schemes; but in neither case was he chiefly swayed by moral considerations. His conduct has been defended on the score of his idealism, which developed his æsthetic faculties at the expense of his moral sense.<sup>4</sup> Yet the poet was extremely fond of "donning the black cap" of the moralist, although he seldom applied this strict measure to his friends, who, when once adopted as such, must on his principles be defended at all costs. This fact is enough to explain his leniency to the faults of Azzo, who no doubt habitually displayed to him only the more attractive side of his character.

Petrarch may have passed through Parma in his youth on

<sup>1</sup> By Litta in his *Famiglie celebri d'Italia*. P. seems to imply in *Var.* 19 that Azzo was accused of this at the time, but he indignantly repudiates the suggestion (*Frac.* III. 347).

<sup>2</sup> *Il Principe*, cap. xviii.

<sup>3</sup> In the Preface to *De Rem. Utr. Fort.*

<sup>4</sup> Koerting (*op. cit.*), pp. 188-196.

his journey to or from the University of Bologna. The city lies in the rich plain of Emilia—a province so called from the Roman “Via Emilia,” which traversed it from south-east to north-west—*i.e.* from Rimini on the Adriatic through Bologna, Modena, and Parma to Piacenza on the banks of the Po. This famous highway bisects Parma from east to west, along the course of the modern main street, the Strada Vittorio Emmanuele. The city was made a Roman colony soon after the second Punic War; but even in Petrarch’s day there were probably few remains of this early period. The present “Castello” dates only from 1591; the fortifications and ditch are mediæval, though probably on the line of the Roman walls. Even in the fourteenth century it was famous for its trade in wool—the produce of the sheep which pastured on the rich surrounding plain. The modern town, through which flows the little river Parma, contains a population of 50,000, and is a strong centre of the co-operative movement; yet there is little, except a fine picture gallery, to attract the foreign visitor. In the Middle Ages Parma’s central position between Lombardy and Tuscany gave it much importance to the princelets who were struggling for supremacy; and its modern Radicalism was anticipated by its steadfast adherence in the wars of the thirteenth century to the Guelf cause.

On Monday, May 21, 1341,<sup>1</sup> the Veronese governor, Benedetto da Malvicina, became aware of secret musters of the citizens; and he determined to strike before the revolt could come to a head. Issuing from his palace after dark with his band of 600 lancers, he attacked a body, which had seized the bridge-head of the main street over the Parma, and killed thirty of the insurgents, arresting their leader, the youngest brother Giovanni da Correggio. He found, however, that the chief force under the two elder brothers had assembled at an open space called the “Arena”<sup>2</sup> near the eastern gate of San Michele, which they had seized, and he put his troops in motion against them. At daylight on the 22nd, before he had made much headway, a cry

<sup>1</sup> The chronicler of Parma says that the city was freed on the 22nd, but he is referring to the successful issue next day. Sismondi’s date of the 17th (IV. 163) is evidently wrong.

<sup>2</sup> Koerting (p. 186) calls this the amphitheatre, but the city had no such building. Modern excavators, however, have found a Roman theatre.

was raised by the citizens that Azzo had entered the town by the northern gate (now called the Porta Garibaldi, but then the Porta San Paolo) with ample succours from Milan <sup>1</sup> and Mantua. The news was true ; and the governor, withdrawing his lancers in haste, retreated on Lucca through the southern Porta Nova (now the Porta San Francesco) on the other side of the stream. This inglorious retirement, through Azzo's arrival in the nick of time, caused unbounded joy in the city. The four brothers—Giovanni had apparently escaped—were called by acclamation to assume the direction of affairs ; and the Commune showed its gratitude by decreeing that a church should be erected to San Bobo (much honoured in Lombardy, whose " day " fell on the 22nd) near the eastern gate.<sup>2</sup>

Azzo must have managed to send word of the successful rising to his late fellow-traveller ; for on the following day the new " laureate " entered the city, and was welcomed with enthusiasm both by the brothers and by the people. The Correggi urged him to remain with them and assist their administration by his counsel. He could not resist so flattering an invitation ; and since a courier was probably leaving at once to convey the news to the Pope, Petrarch indited on the very day of his arrival the following adroit letter <sup>3</sup> to his patron the Cardinal :

" Returning from Rome in possession of my long desired laurel, and bearing, as if I were a victor, the title of ' laureate,' I wish to convey the news modestly to you, who will assuredly be pleased. This very day—as you will be equally glad to hear—under the conduct and auspices of your friends the Correggi, I have entered Parma, which, as you know, had been closed to us—the city restored this same day <sup>4</sup> to herself by the expulsion of the garrison of the tyrants, and her appearance suddenly changed, to the extreme joy of its people, by the return of justice and liberty. Here then, vanquished by their prayers, which they hope—and I have no doubt—you will treat with indulgence, I have determined to spend the summer. They

<sup>1</sup> It is not clear whether the Milanese troops arrived in time, but their presence is asserted by some.

<sup>2</sup> Berlan (*op. cit.* p. 36) says that this church was begun, but its erection was stopped some years later, because the wife of Bernabò Visconti, who was a daughter of Mastino, would not suffer the Parmese to celebrate their triumph over her father.

<sup>3</sup> *F.* IV. 9.

<sup>4</sup> P. writes as if he arrived on the day of the liberation, but his language does not necessarily bear that meaning.



swear solemnly that they greatly need my presence, though this is plainly the result of their fondness, and not of necessity. For of what use can I be in such a state of things? I delight not in the din of cities, but in the silence of the woods; my nature inclines me not to the burdens of law or warfare, but to solitude and leisure. Well aware of my wishes, they promise me splendid quiet, when all this noise and excitement of exultant joy shall have had time to cool down. Anyhow one must comply with such kind entreaties. You will see me at the beginning of winter. I fix that time with the reservation that you may want me sooner, or that accident may keep me longer.

“*Parma, May 23.*”

We may easily believe that, in an age when poetry was revered almost as a divine gift, the presence and countenance of the “laureate,” about whom all Italy was talking, was of no small assistance to Azzo. In his later years Petrarch described<sup>1</sup> the Correggi government as better than any that Parma had ever experienced, or was likely to experience in such evil times. And as regards the year 1341–1342, which was that of his first residence, his judgment is confirmed by a chronicler of Parma,<sup>2</sup> who says that the brothers ruled at the beginning not as lords, but as “fathers of the citizens, without any partiality or severity; and if they had persevered in that course they might always have held it, but after a year they changed their ways.” It is curious that their government is praised by this independent witness for just the period of Petrarch’s stay; but we can hardly suppose that he took a share in it, unless perhaps when his advice was asked.<sup>3</sup> The subsequent discord between the brothers became worse after the death of the second, the kindly and prudent Simone, which took place before Petrarch returned to Parma in 1343.

It must have been in those first days of joy that he wrote the impressive Canzone,<sup>4</sup> which celebrates their triumph in rather

<sup>1</sup> *Ep. Post.* (Frac. I. 9).

<sup>2</sup> *Parm. Chron.* from 1033 to 1436 (published at Parma in 1857).

<sup>3</sup> Berlan (*op. cit.*) strangely speaks as if l. 14 of C. VI. (“Spirto gentil”) —“Le man l’avess’ io avvolte entro i capegli” (*i.e.* of Italy)—might imply that he had had a hand in Italian affairs; but surely that line expresses a wish and does not state a fact.

<sup>4</sup> This Canzone (“Quel c’ ha nostra natura in se piu degno”) exists in many fifteenth-century MSS. and was first printed in Soncino’s edition of the *Rime* (Fano, 1503) as “from an old book,” and subsequently in 1508, 1510 and in the Aldine edition of 1514. Its genuineness is now

too high a key. This poem was excluded by Petrarch from his definitive copy of the *Canzoniere*; and many have been the conjectures as to his motives for so doing. We cannot avoid the suspicion that they were chiefly political. The enterprise of Azzo, which he praises in such hyperbolical terms, ended in disaster, if not in actual disgrace; and though the poet's subsequent letters afford ample proof that he was never ashamed of his relations with Azzo, he may have recognized that his praise of his friend, judged by the light of after events, had been couched in too grandiloquent language. His later patrons, the Visconti, were afterwards on good terms with the lords of Verona, to whom he was himself indebted for personal favours.<sup>1</sup> Some at least of these considerations may have influenced his action; but Petrarch never relinquished without regret productions which he knew to be "good copy."<sup>2</sup> He was probably aware that the Ode had been widely circulated in Parma, and might be trusted to reach posterity without his help.

He opens it with the assertion that man's highest prerogative (after reason) is wrath against evil doing; which is exemplified in Azzo more than in any patriot, ancient or modern. Liberty is so sweet and the tyranny of Verona so extreme that the absence of a liberator would arouse wonder in those who know not the difficulty of inducing men to act. There has been no greater oppression than that under which Parma groaned, and therefore Azzo's merit in acting against it is unique. This remains true, although he did not die for his country; for he was willing to do so, if necessity had compelled him. Such is

universally admitted; and it is printed in the "Giunta" of most editions before the close of the last century. Mestica unfortunately excluded it; and it is therefore not comprised in the *Concordanza della Rime di F. P.* (1912) by K. McKenzie. The best commentator is F. Berlan (*op. cit.* 95-202); there seems to be no complete English translation.

<sup>1</sup> P.'s son Giovanni (legitimated in 1347) was granted a canonry at Verona in 1352 by Can Grande II. at the instance of Azzo; but he lost it two years later when Azzo fell into disgrace with the Scaligers.

<sup>2</sup> Aldus suggested that P. might have omitted it from his autograph edition because he thought it unworthy of him. Carducci, who includes it in his *Rime di F.P. sopra argomenti storici, morali e diversi* (Livorno, 1876), thinks this possible (p. 95), but suggests that P. may have forgotten, not rejected it. He points out that the failure of Rienzi did not make P. suppress poems written in his honour, and that there are strong passages in *F.* and *Sen.* against the Scaliger family, which he retained. These arguments appear to me of no great weight. When P. transcribed the *Canzoniere*, Azzo was dead; and his liberation of Parma, which the Ode lauds in such exalted terms, had been forgotten.

the concord between the brothers that it may be hoped her liberty will be eternal. He bids his ode go forth to tell of their glory, especially in Tuscany, where noble deeds are held in honour. The following lines are an eloquent apostrophe to freedom, and to the services which Azzo had rendered to it: <sup>1</sup>

- " O Liberty, sweet and desired good,  
 Ill known of him who ne'er thy loss has known,  
 How welcome to the noble must thou be!  
 Through thee has life in leaf and blossom blown;  
 By thee is gendered such a happy mood  
 As to the high gods doth resemble me.  
 I would not wish for honours without thee,  
 40. Or wealth or all the things that men desire.  
 A lowly roof with thee contents the mind.  
 O grievous weight unkind!  
 Which for so long a journey doth but tire;  
*How was't we did not find*  
*Sooner relief to our shoulders from the load?*  
 So tiring is the road  
 By which we needs must climb to Virtue's height  
 That men are fearful only at the sight.

- A 'royal heart,' <sup>2</sup> as signifies his name,  
 50. It was that passed safe to its high emprise  
 O'er sea and land, o'er plain and lofty hill;  
 No steep forbidden track its course denies  
 To the noble soul which, constantly the same,  
 Quick made its aid felt with compassionate will  
 Promptly to heal the people's pressing ill.  
 Pitying the good, resistless to the foe,  
 He lifted off the city's load of care,  
 And sweetly mustered there  
 The gentle flock, far scattered in their woe,  
 60. Whom force forbade to know  
 Their country's laws, ruthlessly set at nought,  
 And who were slowly brought  
 To misery by 'dogs' <sup>3</sup> with hungry leap  
 Not tending, but devouring the poor sheep."

Then follow the usual erudite allusions to Sicilian, Roman, and Italian tyrants and to "liberators" such as Brutus, Cato, the Fabii and the Decii; and the poet concludes with a veiled compliment to his ancestral state of Florence (which, however, is not named) as the champion of liberty. In this poem

"Born in the midst of arms and far from books" (l. 113)

<sup>1</sup> I borrow in ll. 33-48 the version by Mrs. Jerrold (*F. P.* p. 75) with two slight alterations (italicized) for greater clearness in ll. 44, 45.

<sup>2</sup> "Cor regio"—a play upon Azzo's surname.

<sup>3</sup> Carducci (p. 87) notes the evident reference here to the Christian names "Can" (Can Grande, "great dog") and "Mastino" ("mastiff") borne by several members of the tyrant family. Cf. *F. XIX.* 9, "Verona miserabilis, Actæonis in morem, suis ipsa canibus laceretur."



Petrarch becomes for the moment almost a political Guelf; he is content to forget his own exile and the injustice committed by that party against his father. Carducci, who published a learned commentary on the ode, says <sup>1</sup> that although he should not dare to replace it in the *Canzoniere*, it should be rescued from obscurity, because its heartfelt praise of freedom is too rare in Italian lyric.

It was probably in June, not many weeks after his arrival,<sup>2</sup> that the Correggi fulfilled their promise to the poet (mentioned in his letter to the Cardinal) of providing him with a country retreat away from the bustle of the town. About fourteen miles south of Parma by the modern road—though rather less in a direct line—stands on a knoll of red sandstone the ruined castle of Rossena, which then belonged to the Correggi family. It is situated on an extreme northern offshoot of the Apennines, just at the entrance of a charming valley, from which flows the broad and somewhat sluggish stream of the Enza. Below it to the north-west, where the valley opens into the flat plain of Emilia, lies the little village of Ciano. At this point the spurs of the Apennines are studded with ruined castles, many of which belonged in the eleventh century to the Countess Matilda of Tuscany. On a beetling crag about two miles to the east, but not visible from the valley, are some vestiges—they are little more—of her famous castle of Canossa.<sup>3</sup> Azzo perhaps had the idea that since his hold upon Parma seemed precarious, it would be politic to secure a line of retreat into the mountains. At any rate, besides placing a guard in Rossena, he now strengthened with a tower the fort of Guardasone on the opposite, or western, bank of the Enza—an undertaking which was signalized by the laureate in six rhyming hexameters, intended, as some say, to be inscribed on the entrance gate <sup>4</sup>:

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 96.

<sup>2</sup> In *Ep. Metr.* II. xvii. 49-51 ("flexum vix Cynthia callem . . . Transierat") P. appears to assert that it was only a month from his crowning, which is impossible.

<sup>3</sup> J. A. Symonds (art. "Canossa" in *Cornhill Magazine*, Vol. XXXVII., April, 1878, p. 470) says that the ancient castle with its triple circuit of walls (within which the Emperor Henry IV. did his penance in the snow to the Pope in 1077), was destroyed by the people of Reggio in 1255.

<sup>4</sup> These lines are not in the folios, but were first printed by Mehus (*Vita di Ambrogio Traversari*, 1759, p. 257), afterwards by Affo in his *Memoirs of Parmese writers* (1789) and by Dom. Rossetti (*F. P. Poemata*

" Raised aloft by hands victorious, on a bold, commanding height,  
 To the stars I lift my towers, from all sides a noble sight.  
 Glory of the race Correggio ! Glittering Parma's mighty sire,  
 Warlike Azzo, to defend her bade my battlements aspire.  
 Friends may view me without blenching, foes must tremble when they  
 know  
 That unless they sue for friendship, 'neath the yoke their necks must  
 go." <sup>1</sup>

To this fortified portal of the Apennines the poet retired, in the company of Azzo or one of his brothers, during the summer heat of 1341. There is a kind of tradition, which is quite unauthenticated, that he occupied some cottage in the village of Ciano.<sup>2</sup> It is far more likely that he lodged with his hosts in the larger of the two fortresses, whose walls of red stone, now in a ruined state, guard the left entrance of the valley. The gorge itself, though now only covered with a few young trees, must then have been more wild and perhaps densely wooded ; and Petrarch seized the opportunity of wandering alone up the declivity on the right bank of the stream to a gently sloping plateau near the top. From this point, called Selva Piana, not only can the castle of Canossa be descried to the east, but away to the north there is a magnificent view over the vast plain of the Po, extending even to the natural bastion of the Alps, which fringes the far horizon ; the cleft of the Brenner Pass and the peaks of Venetia are said to be distinctly visible.<sup>3</sup> In a metrical letter to Barbato of two years later <sup>4</sup> Petrarch thus describes the scene from memory :

*Minora*, Trieste, 1829-34, t. iii. app. p. 4). I do not know Rossetti's authority for his assertion that they are a lapidary inscription.

<sup>1</sup> " Imperiosa situ, victrici condita dextrâ,  
 Turris ad astra levor, spectabilis intus et extra,  
 Corrigiæ splendor ; fulget quo principe Parma,  
 Bellipoteno Azzo, me vult munimen ad arma ;  
 Me videat securus amans, hostisque tremiscat,  
 Subdere colla jugo, seu poscere fœdera discat."

<sup>2</sup> Frac. (*It.* i. 528) states on the authority of Allodi that P. lodged at a cottage in Ciano, which was pulled down in 1770. A. Ronchini (*La dimora del P. in Parma*, Modena, 1874, p. 9, n.) is justly sceptical about this local tradition. The villagers have a vague idea that a great poet once lodged among them, whom they call " Patriarca " ! (Finzi, *P.*, 1900, p. 48).

<sup>3</sup> Symonds (*op. cit.* p. 471) speaks of this as the view to N. and N.W. from Canossa, which is identical with that from the neighbouring (and equal) height.

<sup>4</sup> *Ep. Metr.* II. xvii. ll. 23-46. P. says that he " gave his companions the slip " in order to enjoy privacy—

" Deferor huc solus furtim, sociosque fefelli." (l. 47.)

"O'er a green mount extends a forest vast  
 'Plana' surnamed, though steep. Here beeches high  
 Keep off the sun, and verdure clothes the soil  
 With particoloured flowers; a rising stream  
 Tempers 'the Crab's' claws, and from the neighbouring crests  
 Cool breezes strike 'the Lion's' face and mane.<sup>1</sup>  
 Behind loom loftier summits, mounting up  
 To grip the sky; 'neath the spectator's feet  
 Expands, far-stretched, Cisalpine Gaul; beyond  
 The Alps are seen—Hesperia's utmost bound.  
 Bird and beast denizens of every kind  
 Frequent the sacred grove; 'mid deepest shade  
 Leaps a cool fount, and winds through rich, lush grass.  
 Here is a flower-girt throne of turf, unbuilt  
 By human hand, but formed with forethought kind  
 By Nature's self—the poet's constant friend,  
 \* \* \* \* \*

Made by sweet scents an outpost of the fields  
 Elysian, the Muses' calm retreat."

Just before these lines the poet tells his friend that on a memorable day the beauty of the spot and the superb view from it awoke the fire of his genius and "restored his fallen pen to his hand." That very day he wrote some verses of his interrupted *Africa* and he did the same daily till his return to Parma.<sup>2</sup> He adds that the compelling motive was the memory of his recent honour and the desire to do something to prove himself worthy of it.

In the lines above quoted there is something intensely modern—not so much in the description of external sights and sounds, which is common in ancient literature, as in the deep sympathy of the poet with their beauty, which enables him to regard Nature as the inspirer of his own high thought, as furnishing these things for his own especial benefit. In Dante there is natural description even more vivid, but it is rather objective than subjective—severely limited to the purpose of making his readers see the creations of his imagination. Petrarch, on the other hand—whether consciously or not—is always the centre of his own descriptions; he feels the affinity of his own soul with nature, though he cannot absorb himself in it with the "abandon" that we find in so many modern poets. Zumbini ascribes this limitation in him—this "seed which could not yet become a plant"—to the strength of his religious faith, which did not allow him to substitute Nature's consolations for the far nobler

<sup>1</sup> The Sun is in Cancer ("The Crab") in June-July and in Leo in July-August.

<sup>2</sup> *Ep. Post.* (Frac. I. 10).



comfort open to the Christian.<sup>1</sup> I am not sure that this is the true explanation of Petrarch's limitations; for in Wordsworth we have a poet of similar self-absorption, but far more conscious sympathy with Nature, who yet has religious aspirations high and pure. There are of course other instances; but what was new in Petrarch, and therefore not yet fully developed, was the habit of looking at Nature subjectively, of "holding the mirror up to it," so that it should reflect his own personality. It was this "fellow-feeling" with Nature which now braced him to sustained poetic effort, just as to a lover of music the rapt absorption in delicious harmonies of sound is apt to convey a new sense of power. That was why the beauty of Vacluse proved so fertile a source of inspiration to him; and in this sense only is Zumbini right in calling Selva Piana "a kind of Vacluse"<sup>2</sup>; for, except in the possession of natural beauty, there is no resemblance between the two places.

It was, therefore, a just instinct which impelled some Italian admirers of the poet in the last century to erect a marble statue<sup>3</sup> to him in the remote Apennine valley which had inspired his Muse. It is life-size, and is enshrined in a small octagonal, temple-like building on the mountain-side, at a considerable distance from any house. It represents the poet, laurel-crowned, seated on a rock with pen in hand and with a book and parchment before him. The poem on which he was then engaged is now almost forgotten; but the dignified figure, rapt in study, indicates his sympathy with the wild scenes in which it is placed. Yet the choice of the site is rather unfortunate; it is a long distance too far down the valley to represent the spot described by himself.<sup>4</sup> No wide view is obtainable from here; and on my visit in 1898 it was not till I had climbed several hundred feet nearly to the top of the spur that a farm-like building was pointed out to me as still retaining the name of Selva Piana. From this

<sup>1</sup> B. Zumbini (*Studi sul P.*, Florence, 1895), in his most interesting study, "Del Sentimento della Natura," pp. 62-66.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 11, n.

<sup>3</sup> I do not know the history of this statue or of the building erected for it, which in 1898 appeared to be entirely strange to the hotel-keepers of Parma. A. Ronchini (*op. cit.* p. 9, n.) says that its erection here was due to a poet, Vincenzo Mistrali. On the building is inscribed, "A.D. MDCCCXXXIX. Per visibil segno dell' onore dato a questo luogo dal P."

<sup>4</sup> I am glad to find that Ronchini (*op. cit.* p. 9) is of the same opinion. He says that the site of the building is locally called "alle pendici" (on the declivity).

point the view is indeed magnificent, and resembles that described by Mr. Symonds as seen by him from the castle of Canossa, which here appeared not far away, at about the same height above the sea. The idea that this spot could be reached in "a day's stroll" from Parma<sup>1</sup> can only be excused by ignorance of the country, and is not supported by the *Epistle to Posterity*.

Here, then, Petrarch spent two or three months of the summer and did not return to Parma probably before the end of August. Of his residence in the city he says in the *Epistle to Posterity*, "When I had obtained a quiet and retired house, which I afterwards bought and still retain, in no long time I brought the *Africa* to a conclusion, toiling at it with a zeal that amazes me to-day."<sup>2</sup> On this short sentence, which I have conjecturally marked as the point where he resumed the *Epistle* in his old age,<sup>3</sup> there are two questions to ask, to which it is not easy to give a confident answer.

1. Did he buy the house during this first residence at Parma of about a year? It is scarcely conceivable that he did so, because he had promised the Cardinal to return to Avignon early in the winter; and the purchase of the house, which he at once repaired or enlarged,<sup>4</sup> would imply the prospect of a long, or at least, a frequent residence. Fracassetti decides<sup>5</sup>—I believe rightly—that he bought the house on his next return to Parma in 1344; but he is wrong in supposing that it is the same house, which is still shown there as his abode. I must postpone my reasons for this statement to a later chapter. At present I need only say, as against those who have followed Fracassetti,<sup>6</sup> that the house in the Vico San Stefano, which an inscription identifies with it,<sup>7</sup> did not come into Petrarch's possession till he became

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Jerrold (p. 73) has misunderstood the meaning of the passage.

<sup>2</sup> *Ep. Post.* (Frac. I. 10), where he wrongly states his age as thirty-four, instead of thirty-seven.

<sup>3</sup> See Excursus VII. (below, p. 425).

<sup>4</sup> See *Ep. Metr.* II. xix. (below, p. 339).

<sup>5</sup> (*It.*) I. pp. 173, 528. De Sade (II. p. 21) supposes that he bought it during this first visit; while Rossetti (ii. p. 405) and Ronchini (pp. 20 and 27) suggest that it was in 1347, after he obtained the canonry. The latter is impossible (see *F.* VII. 1); and I feel sure that the date of *Ep. Metr.* II. xix. is 1344 and not 1342 or 1348.

<sup>6</sup> As Mrs. Jerrold (p. 73). See Chap. XVIII. (below).

<sup>7</sup> "F. P. possedette ed abito questa casa," etc. The inscription was put up in 1836, when the fact that he had two houses in Parma was not known.

Archdeacon of the Cathedral in 1350,<sup>1</sup> for it was attached to that office and was never his own property. The house, which he now hired and afterwards bought in 1344, was in a much more retired quarter; it has been conjecturally placed in the healthy southern outskirts of the city on the right bank of the Parma, to the south-east of the modern bridge called the Ponte di Cappazurro. The house in the Vico San Stefano which we may call "the Archdeaconry," though larger and more commodious, appears never to have been used by him, because he did not reside at Parma after the year 1350. In a letter of May 18, 1349,<sup>2</sup> he contrasts the two houses, describing his own as "small, retired, healthy," and not, like the other, in the middle of the city. This is the house, which in September, 1347,<sup>3</sup> he says has been waiting for him for two years, and in which—though with long absences—he spent the greater part of the three following years.

2. The second question, "Did he really 'finish' the *Africa* at this time or at any time?" is far harder to resolve. Its full discussion would require a whole chapter, and would involve the relation here of many details as to the state of his works at the time of his death, which properly belong to that period. One thing is plain, that the nine books of the *Africa* that we possess are all that were to be found after his death.<sup>4</sup> But there is a yawning gap between the fourth and fifth books, which may extend to many thousands of lines, and which effectually prevents any fair judgment of the poem as a whole. Petrarch has given no indication of its length; but it may be conjectured<sup>5</sup> that he intended it to consist, like the *Æneid*, of twelve books, and in that case more than three and a half books are missing at this point, and the last book is evidently incomplete, though

<sup>1</sup> P. was appointed to the Archdeaconry of Parma in 1348, but not formally installed till June, 1350. See Ronchini, p. 29, n., and Carlo Cipolla, *Note Petrarcesche desunte dall' Archivio Vaticano in Memorie della Reale Accad. di Torino*, Series II. (1909) (Tom. 59, pp. 1-32).

<sup>2</sup> Frac. III. 527 (Appendix VI.). Fracassetti did not discover this letter till after the above note (see n. 5, p. 171) was written. This letter (as shown below, Chap. XXII.) was a first draft of the four edited letters to "Olympius" (F. VIII. 2-5).

<sup>3</sup> F. VII. 1 (to Barbato).

<sup>4</sup> F. Corradini (on the *Africa* in *Padova a F. P.*, Padua, 1874), p. 434, and the letter of Coluccio Salutati to Brossano (P.'s son-in-law) there quoted.

<sup>5</sup> Koerting, p. 662. Zumbini, in his essay on the *Africa* (*Studi sul P.*, 1895, pp. 112, 113, n.), seems to be of the same opinion.



we have the conclusion of it.<sup>1</sup> If this were all that he ever wrote, can we suppose, with Koerting,<sup>2</sup> that he was under "the fond delusion" that he had finished it? In Petrarch we have a poet who—as his autograph copy of the *Canzoniere* shows—was no scamping workman, but rather one who would dismiss no lyric poem from his hand until he had polished and retouched it with the most scrupulous care. We have no right to assume that he was less careful with his Latin than with his Italian poems. Moreover, the *Africa*, we must remember, was to be his masterpiece, which was sure to be compared with the works of those old Romans, whom he still fondly called "our poets" by contrast with the "barbarians" of the imperial provinces.

Here no doubt we have a reason for his extreme unwillingness to publish the poem during his life. Nature had endowed him, both in Latin and in Italian, with much of the facility of the "improvvisatori"; but she had not bestowed upon him the patient constructive art, which reveals the strength of a great epic poet. Petrarch was aware of his own limitations, for he has himself observed that his mind was "remarkable rather for dexterity than for strength."<sup>3</sup> He was capable of a grand poetic design, and could "dash off" separate episodes under the genial impulse of a first conception. But the labour of construction—the toil of welding the several parts into one symmetrical whole—was beyond him. Therefore when he speaks of "bringing the work to a conclusion," we are merely to understand that he had completed the first rough draft; but this probably included many passages which were merely provisional, and which gave him less satisfaction every time that he read them. He never summoned up courage to recast the whole poem; and feeling the weight of years and the accumulation under his

<sup>1</sup> At IX. 215 a marginal note in a Venetian MS. says, "hic somnium interjectum debet esse." Carlini supposes (p. 36) that the details of Ennius' dream which follow included a vision of the Latin poets his successors (like the enumeration in *Ecl.* X.). According to Corradini (p. 411) P. could not have written the following lines about himself before 1351, because there are allusions to *Rev. Mem.* and *De Vir. Ill.*, which were written later than 1342. The last statement is a mistake as to *De Vir. Ill.* (Corradini confuses this with the later *Epitome*). *Rev. Mem.* was certainly written early (see Chap. XVIII., below), and, if not begun, may have been projected in 1342. That year appears to me far the most likely for P.'s self-laudation.

<sup>2</sup> Koerting, pp. 199, 654.

<sup>3</sup> *Ep. Post.* (Frac. I. 7).

hand of other unfinished tasks, he felt, too, that his original inspiration had deserted him.

But the poem at present is not complete, even in the sense of a "first rough draft." What has become of the missing parts? I cannot resist the suspicion that in a fit of momentary despondency Petrarch deliberately destroyed them, perhaps towards the close of his life. For years he may have meant to rewrite them, but always shrank from the task. Perhaps his sensitive nature was so wounded by the criticisms poured upon a short extract published against his will<sup>1</sup> that he was disgusted with the work and seriously contemplated burning the whole, as Virgil had threatened to burn the *Æneid*. But our poet could not bring himself to that supreme sacrifice; and he may have been consoled by the thought that the work was too imperfect to be given to the world after his death. Vergerio speaks<sup>2</sup> of having seen and copied a note in the poet's own hand, appended to the margin of his *Epistle to Posterity* in the following terms: "Seldom has any father sent his only son to the funeral pyre with such sadness as I felt in committing the act; and if you carefully consider all the toil that I have wasted upon that work, you could scarcely restrain your tears." His contemporary biographer<sup>3</sup> supposes that he here says he has actually done what he merely intended to do—viz., burn the whole poem. It may be so; but it is just as possible he may be referring to an actual destruction of many sheets, which left the poem a mere ruin. Vergerio, however, expresses the opinion that the chief gap was never filled, and adds that in his later years, whenever the *Africa* was mentioned, Petrarch became uneasy and confused, and appeared most anxious to avoid the subject.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I refer to the thirty-four lines on the death of Mago (Lib. VI. 885–918) which P. allowed Barbato to copy in 1343 on his promise of absolute secrecy, but which nevertheless became public property and were severely criticized at Florence. See Chap. XVIII. (below); the story is told by P. in *Sen.* II. 1 (to Boccaccio).

<sup>2</sup> Pietro Paolo Vergerio the elder, in his life of P. (written in the 14th or early 15th century) printed by Tomasini in his *P. Redivivus* (1650), pp. 175–184. This writer was the first to suggest that P. purposely omitted from his poem Scipio's journey to King Syphax as tending little to his hero's credit. The statement has been often repeated, although (as Zumbini shows, p. 113, n.) P. in his *De Vir. Ill.* (Razzolini's ed. I. p. 482) expresses admiration for that journey.

<sup>3</sup> Vergerio may be so called (whatever the date of his life of P.), for he was born in 1349 and was therefore twenty-five at the poet's death.

<sup>4</sup> G. Squarzafico, whose life of P. is often literally copied from Vergerio,

Any reader of the *Epistle to Posterity* would naturally suppose that he "finished" the poem—in the above restricted sense—during this first stay in Parma. Yet there are other passages in his works which scarcely accord with this view. In the *Secret*<sup>1</sup>—written at Avignon in the early months of 1343—he makes St. Augustine tell him that he is then hard at work on the *Africa* and warn him that death may intervene before the work is finished. Petrarch replies that during a recent severe illness—this was probably at Parma in the spring of 1342<sup>2</sup>—he had been tormented with the thought of leaving his poem "half-finished" (*semi-explicitam*) and was tempted in consequence to commit it to the flames, though actually he refrained from doing so. In 1344 he writes to his friend Pastrengo<sup>3</sup> from Parma, during his second residence there, that he is still engaged on the *Africa*; this is his last reference to its actual composition. At the close of his first Eclogue, which was written in 1346,<sup>4</sup> he says that he began his poem in trepidation and still hopes that "the voice of Orpheus will not be denied him"<sup>5</sup>; and in the letter to his brother (of December, 1349<sup>6</sup>) explaining this Eclogue, he utters the fervent wish that he might bring his poem to as happy a close in his old age as he had hopefully begun it in his youth. Writing perhaps a year earlier to Lancillotto dell' Anguissola<sup>7</sup> about his *Africa*, he says that he is still "uncertainly waiting the end of it" and trusts that all his labours will not be fruitless.

We see, then, that seven years after his first stay in Parma he still considered the poem unfinished. How can we reconcile

improves upon this by adding a story that when P. was once welcomed at Verona by a procession, which chanted in his honour the stolen verses of the *Africa*, he burst into tears and protested against the theft. (B. ed. *ad init.*)

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 411, "utroque opere [*Africa* and *De Vir. Ill.*] *inexpleto*." In this work P. often cites verses from the *Africa*, but never from the lost books. Corradini (pp. 421, 435) thought that he found such a passage in the Preface; but Carlini—no doubt rightly—considers that it refers to Lib. II. 379.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 189, below.

<sup>3</sup> *Ep. Metr.* II. xix.

<sup>4</sup> E. Carrara, "*I commenti antichi e la Cronologia delle Ecloghe Petrarqueschi*" in *Giorn. Stor. della Lett. Ital.*, t. xxviii. (1896), who has carefully investigated the question, confidently gives this date.

<sup>5</sup> *Ecl.* I. *ad fin.*

<sup>6</sup> *F. X.* 4. The date is practically certain, though P. from a slip of memory says it was "three summers back" (instead of four) that he wrote the *Eclogue*.

<sup>7</sup> *F. VII.* 18 (Frac. I. 404).



these passages with the statement in the *Epistle to Posterity* that "in no long time" after he left Selva Piana he brought it to a conclusion? We are in the region of pure hypothesis, and perhaps no satisfactory reconciliation is possible. The statement was made towards the end of his life; and in the very passage where it occurs he seems to confound his first and second visits to Parma (August, 1341–May, 1342 and December, 1343–February, 1345).<sup>1</sup> But unless he is to be convicted of a total failure of memory, we must assume that he actually completed his first draft during one of those visits; and perhaps the "no long time" might be liberally interpreted to mean "within three or four years." The dedicatory passage to King Robert's memory (Lib. IX. 421–477) could not have been written till 1343, for the King died in January of that year. The fifty-two lines on the King's exploits in the first book (I. 19–70) were plainly composed during his lifetime; and perhaps these were the first written by Petrarch in his woodland retreat. He may have then decided not to resume the poem at the point in the fourth book where he left off,<sup>2</sup> but to transfer his hero at once to Africa, which he had so far not reached, and relate the effective episode of Sophonisba (Lib. V.). Afterwards he wrote *currente calamo* in the Apennines and at Parma during the winter of 1341, 1342. Books VI.–IX. 420 (not completing, however, the dream of Ennius)<sup>3</sup>—a matter of about 4,600 lines, ending with Scipio's triumph at Rome. Looking back after thirty years upon this heavy winter's work, which had brought him to the proposed end, he might consider this as bringing the poem to a conclusion, although there were two gaps—one of them of great extent—which made it very imperfect. Did he ever fill those gaps? As I have already said, I believe that he did—probably during

<sup>1</sup> See Excursus VII. p. 425, n. 1. P. may mean in the sentence of *Ep. Post.* after that under discussion that he subsequently made longer stays in Parma, but if so, his expression is by no means clear.

<sup>2</sup> I assume here that P. had made a general plan of the whole poem before he began what is now the fifth book. It is true that in the opening of that book, which relates the interview of Masinissa with Sophonisba after the capture of Cirta, he does not mention either by name; and Corradini (p. 435) argues from this fact that the missing parts had been already written when he composed that book. I cannot admit the necessity of this conclusion, if P. intended afterwards to relate the siege of Cirta. It is granted on all hands that he never meant the work to appear as we have it. See the analysis of the poem in Excursus VI, at the end of this book.

<sup>3</sup> See above, n. 1, p. 173.

his second residence at Parma in 1344—but that he was so dissatisfied with his later work that he either lost <sup>1</sup> or destroyed it, and never had the poem recopied as a whole. My reasons for this view are, (1) that in mentioning the poem to three different friends in 1352 <sup>2</sup> he refers to it not as incomplete, but as needing careful revision <sup>3</sup>; and (2) that such an intimate friend as Boccaccio, who had seen it, <sup>4</sup> evidently considered it as finished and urged him more than once to send it forth to the world. In 1362 <sup>5</sup> Petrarch allowed his friends to suppose that it would not be published till after his death; and Boccaccio, in writing to one who was disappointed at the delay, <sup>6</sup> defends this decision on the ground that his “master was old and did not care in the evening of life to expose himself to the shafts of hostile criticism.” Yet he knew of his threat to burn the *Africa*, and expressed his fears in his consolatory letter to the poet’s son-in-law of November 8, 1374. <sup>7</sup> I cannot think that Boccaccio ever read the poem as a whole <sup>8</sup>; but Petrarch may have read him selections on one of the occasions when he was his guest.

<sup>1</sup> Corradini (p. 435) and Carlini (p. 35) seem to prefer this alternative; but Zumbini (p. 112, n.), while mentioning it as a possibility, adopts in the main the view I have taken in the text.

<sup>2</sup> *F.* XII. 7 (to Barbato), XIII. 7 (to P. de Rainzeville) and XIII. 11 (to the Abbot of Corvara). In the first he compares the *Africa* to an apple, which is ruined if picked too early, and reminds B. that a poem, once published, cannot be recalled.

<sup>3</sup> Gaspari (*op. cit.* p. 366) seems to think this reason in itself sufficient, but P. does not expressly say to any of his correspondents that the poem *only* needs revision. Rossetti, on the contrary (t. I. Disc. Prel. p. xviii.), says that after 1342 P. never touched the poem again. Zumbini and Carlini both dissent from this view, the former maintaining (p. 70, n.) that P. always thought highly of the poem.

<sup>4</sup> So he expressly says in a letter of 1362 (to Barbato), first published by M. Vattasso (*Del P. e di alcuni suoi amici*, Rome, 1904, p. 26).

<sup>5</sup> See the remarkable letter of 1362 to P. from Niccolo Acciaiuoli and the two Orsini (first published by Vattasso, *ibid.* pp. 21, 22), protesting against the delay. This, if ever sent, must have elicited an answer from P., but it has not come down to us. A poetaster of the day—Domenico di Silvestro—even ventured to hint that if the world had to wait for the poet’s death, the sooner that event occurred the better! See Zardo (*P. e i Carrarasi*, p. 262).

<sup>6</sup> To P. da Monteforte (of April 5, 1373) in F. Corazzini’s *Lettere di Giovanni Boccaccio*, Florence, 1877, pp. 354-356.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* p. 383.

<sup>8</sup> Carlini (p. 33) thinks that he had read it, quoting the Latin lines on the *Africa* attributed to Boccaccio and first published by Rossetti (t. III. App. III. pp. 50-63), in which he finds an allusion to the missing books. But those lines prove at most that Boccaccio had heard from P.’s lips the general plan of the poem. Corradini (p. 98) thinks it impossible that

Petrarch's renown as a scholar would certainly stand higher if he had carried out his intention of destroying the *Africa*; according to the famous aphorism of Tacitus, its splendour would have been taken for granted, had it remained unknown.<sup>1</sup> Among the ingenious reasons given by critics for its failure is seldom included the fact that it is merely rough-hewn—a statue barely extricated from the marble. In such circumstances a detailed criticism is manifestly unfair<sup>2</sup>; the poet's own attitude towards it invites condemnation.<sup>3</sup> But the work of a first-rate poet, even if unfinished and unrevised, must retain some traces of his supreme craftsmanship. Is it fair to represent the poem as “unreadable,”<sup>4</sup> or to speak—as Landor did in a splenetic moment—of its “immeasurable sea of sand”<sup>5</sup>? At any rate an eminent English poet of Landor's day considered an episode of the *Africa* as worthy of translation<sup>6</sup>; and the historian of the Revival of Learning chose nine lines from its last book as the motto of his title-page.<sup>7</sup> But these, it may be said, are jewels snatched from a heap of ruins—merely oases in a dry prosaic desert. Yet in spite of the neglect into which it fell from its first publication, an Italian admirer<sup>8</sup> can still call it “a most splendid versification of Roman History”—a description which, while ignoring the grandeur of its scope, hints not inaptly at the causes of its failure. Those causes may, perhaps, be reduced to three: (1) That the subject was too historical for epic treatment; (2) That Petrarch was too much absorbed in his own personality to handle effectively a long series of incidents and events; and (3) (as a consequence of (2)) that his genius was for lyric rather than for epic poetry. A dim

the lines can be by Boccaccio, because they contain many mistakes. Two most capable critics—Hortis, (*Sulle Op. Lat. del Giov. Bocc.* p. 307) and Zardo (*op. cit.* p. 265) take the opposite view.

<sup>1</sup> *Agricola*, cap. XXX., “Omne ignotum pro magnifico.”

<sup>2</sup> It is for this reason that, at the risk of a long digression, I review the poem here instead of devoting a separate chapter to it.

<sup>3</sup> Assuming, that is, the truth of Vergerio's statements as to his attitude (see p. 174, above). I take the view (as against Zumbini, see n. 3, p. 177) that after 1352 P. neglected the poem altogether.

<sup>4</sup> Burckhardt (*op. cit.* I. p. 363).

<sup>5</sup> *Pentameron and Minor Prose Pieces* (Boston, 1888), p. 377. He there says that he has read about five hundred lines and does not believe that “any man living” has read more; but he had only the incorrect folio editions, and the poem has since been minutely studied. Yet four pages further on (p. 381) he says with characteristic inconsistency that “no small measure of commendation is due to it.”

<sup>6</sup> Lord Byron translated the Mago episode (Lib. VI. 885–918).

<sup>7</sup> J. A. Symonds there cites Lib. IX. 453–461.

<sup>8</sup> Zumbini (*op. cit.* p. 120).



consciousness in his later years of these defects is sufficient to account for his abandonment of the poem.

1. Let us examine more closely these reasons for its failure. The true epic is concerned with actual (or supposed) events rather than with emotions; but if the events are to be successfully fused with poetic imagination, they must lie on the borderland of history—in the domain of legend, which is history treated poetically. Perhaps there has been no really great epic, whose subject has been drawn from historical events, ancient or recent.<sup>1</sup> The so-called “epics” of early Roman Literature—as those of Ennius and Nævius—were only “metrical annals,” interspersed with the new mythology borrowed from Greece. Petrarch thought himself debarred by his Christian position from the use of mythical expedients; and he had at his elbow the prose-poem of Livy on the second Punic War, with which it would have seemed to him a profanation to take any liberties.<sup>2</sup> Thus he was thrown back upon the self-conscious devices of his own art; and the distance of time separating him from the events of his poem did not help him to invest them with the glamour of Romance. He lived, it is true, in the age succeeding that when Romance started on its splendid career, and when its first practitioners took extreme liberties with many of the heroes of the classical period.<sup>3</sup> But Petrarch knew little or nothing of the mediæval romances; his studies and his models alike lay not in the legendary stories woven out of classical subjects, but in classical literature itself. Even if he had had the invention, he would have scorned to clothe his Scipio in the motley of a mediæval “Alexandreid.” His theme was not the legendary,

<sup>1</sup> Niebuhr asserts in his Lectures that no events are unsuited for epic treatment simply because they are modern or historical. But he can give no example of a successful epic of this type. Many critics can see no poetry at all in Lucan's *Pharsalia*, which is the most conspicuous attempt in ancient literature.

<sup>2</sup> In the historical parts P. follows Livy very closely, sometimes even adopting his language; it is, however, an absurd exaggeration to say that the *Africa* “is a mere transcript from history, pages of it being Livy word for word” (Mrs. Jerrold, *F.P., Poet and Humanist*, p. 195).

<sup>3</sup> I am fully aware in making this statement that many of the fabulous materials of the French romances on Alexander and Troy are taken from ancient or Eastern sources. But the Middle Ages had not the smallest faculty for distinguishing legend from history; while P. possessed this faculty in a surprising degree for his time. I am astounded that Dr. Saintsbury, in his *History of Criticism* (Vol. I. p. 456), declines to consider P. as a critic at all. Has he, with all his omnivorous reading, never read any of the Latin works—above all, of the Letters?

but the historic greatness of Rome ; and he would have thought it impious to evolve incidents and characters out of his own fancy, as Ariosto and Tasso did in their romantic epics on the struggle with the Paynim. His chief model was the *Æneid*, which he followed as closely as he dared ; but Virgil had a liberty of invention which was denied to his imitator. His subject-matter was in the region of legend ; while the Roman triumph which Petrarch sang was already recorded by the historian in characters " more lasting than bronze." <sup>1</sup> The truly great epic must be a product of the spirit of a people on its political or religious side—either descending from the cloudland of its early fancy, as in Homer, the Edda, the *Cid*, the *Nibelungenlied*, or expressing the ideas and beliefs of a highly-developed life, as in the *Æneid*, the *Commedia*, the *Paradise Lost*. Petrarch's contemporaries—at least the more cultured—fancied themselves the descendants of the Roman Republic and regarded Scipio as their natural hero ; but the fancy was a delusion, corresponding to no vital fact of the time. The *Africa*, which was meant by its poet to rouse them from their torpor was the product of learning rather than of poetry <sup>2</sup> ; and the language in which he wrote it, if not actually dead, was unintelligible to the majority of his countrymen.

2. The second and more serious reason for Petrarch's failure lay not in the character of his material, but in his own temperament. His subjectivity—the very quality which makes him such an interesting phenomenon in his century—was fatal to his success as an epic poet. He could not get away from himself, even in thought, so that it has been not unfairly said that the subject of the *Africa* is " the apotheosis of Rome and of Francesco Petrarca." <sup>3</sup> I have already alluded <sup>4</sup> to the capital error which led him, in the two episodes <sup>5</sup> of his poem that foretell the future to introduce a prophecy of his wonderful coming epic and of his personal triumph on the Capitol. Such supreme vanity would be a blot upon any work of the imagination ; but in a heroic-epic poem, where the writer should wholly lose himself in his subject, it is the one unpardonable sin. The prominence of Dante's

<sup>1</sup> " Aere perennius " (Hor. *Odes*, III. xxx. 1).

<sup>2</sup> Koerting, p. 674.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted with approval by Carlini (p. 171), as from Zumbini, but I cannot find the passage in his *Studi sul P.*

<sup>4</sup> See the previous chapter, p. 150.

<sup>5</sup> In the dream of Scipio (Lib. II. 441-446) and the dream of Ennius (Lib. IX. 216-267).

personality in the *Commedia*—nay, the frequent intrusion of his own views and prejudices—is no real exception to this rule. He is the necessary human spectator of the wonderful scenes unfolded before him, the real significance of which belongs not to any point of time, past or present, but is eternal. We cannot conceive the exquisite taste of Virgil committing such a blunder as to make Anchises foretell the *Æneid* in the sixth book. Petrarch's subjectivity, however, is visible not here and there only, but in the general tone and design of the *Africa*. The melancholy produced by the struggle within him of humanity and asceticism clings to the whole poem. He was profoundly dissatisfied with his own time; but although he is dealing with a far distant age, he is still too much of a publicist to shake himself free from the problems of his own. The original design of his epic was the glorification of Rome and of classical antiquity. But Rome, though but a ruin, was eternal; he himself was her citizen and (in his own eyes) the last of the old Romans; it therefore behoved him to recall to his contemporaries the valour of their forefathers, and urge them to arise and expel the stranger from their midst. Here we find the political motive of the poem, which furnishes a kind of excuse for his self-exaltation. For the moment he was intoxicated, like Rienzi a few years later, with the dream of a revived republic and of himself as its herald.

It would be a mistake to suppose that the *Africa* failed in the fifteenth century because of its antiquarian erudition.<sup>1</sup> That was a feature of it which would appeal to a generation of scholars, whom the poet himself had helped to form. It rather failed—apart from its incompleteness—because they found flaws in its archæology, and because the course of subsequent history discredited its poet as a prophet. Far more evident to them than to him were the anachronism of Hasdrubal inspecting the edifices of imperial Rome (Lib. VIII. 850-955), and the absurdity of making a monotheistic "Jupiter" foretell to personified Rome and Carthage the Incarnation of His Son (Lib. VII. 500-726). They could no longer take the poet and his political dreams at his own valuation. Moreover, their learning, inspired by himself, enabled them to pounce upon mistakes in grammar

<sup>1</sup> A. Giordano (*F. P. e l' Africa*, Fabriano, 1890), whose work I have not seen, deals with the *Africa* chiefly as a monument of erudition.



and prosody,<sup>1</sup> which he would doubtless have removed in revising his work.<sup>2</sup>

3. Another defect of the poem, resulting from Petrarch's subjectivity, is that, though in conception belonging to the epic class, its beauties are rather lyrical than epic.<sup>3</sup> The same exception was taken by Niebuhr to the *Æneid*. What Canon Cruttwell has said of that poem applies also—of course *longo intervallo*—to the *Africa*: "Had Virgil been able to keep rigidly to the lofty purpose with which he entered on his work, we should perhaps have lost the episodes which bring out his purest inspiration."<sup>4</sup> It has been truly remarked that the lyrical beauties of the *Africa*, which relieve it from utter dullness, are just those which are most original and drawn from the poet's own experience.<sup>5</sup> The love of Sophonisba and its unhappy end, occupying nearly the whole of the fifth book, is treated in a manner which constantly recalls the *Canzoniere*.<sup>6</sup> Even the description of her physical charms shows that the poet is here painting his "Laura." The epic action of the poem is impeded by this long digression; while the dying speech of Mago (Lib. VI. 885-918), who is merely a subordinate personage unconnected with the plot, is introduced merely to express the poet's views on the vanity of human life. The objection taken to this passage by his Florentine critics<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The language and style of the poem, according to Zumbini (p. 151) is classical, as compared with Dante's Latin, yet it is vastly inferior to the Latin of the Renaissance poets. Carlini (p. 183) thinks that P. would have claimed for himself, as a late writer, a greater liberty of style than he found in his models. Corradini, in his learned *Præmium* (pp. 92, 93) gives a list of some of P.'s mistakes in prosody and of his rather frequent use of arsis and synizesis. According to Vergerio, P. was conscious of these mistakes, and had placed a black mark against them for correction. See *Ep. Metv.* III. xxvi. (to Andrea of Mantua) for a bitter reply to a critic of a false quantity.

<sup>2</sup> Not only are the early folio editions of 1501, 1503, 1554 and 1581 full of amazing blunders, but the first modern edition by L. Pingaud (Paris, 1872) did little to correct them. F. Corradini's edition (Padua, 1874) is far superior and likely to remain the best.

<sup>3</sup> Gaspari (Italian translation), p. 368.

<sup>4</sup> C. T. Cruttwell, *History of Roman Literature to Marcus Aurelius*, p. 265.

<sup>5</sup> Zumbini, pp. 133, 139.

<sup>6</sup> Carlini has a chapter on this subject (Part III. Chap. III.), where he gives a list of passages in the *Rime*, which recall the characteristics of the *Africa*. His idea that Sophonisba stands for "Laura" and Italian poetry and Masinissa, her lover and the ally of the Romans, for P., the student of Roman literature, seems rather fanciful.

<sup>7</sup> See above, n. 1, p. 174.

that it is out of place in the mouth of a pagan is sound enough ; yet considered by itself it is one of the most moving passages of the poem. It is Petrarch himself who, through the mouth of Mago, contrasts the stormy lot of man, ever threatened by death, with the peaceful existence of the other animals, who go unconsciously to their doom. The passage is wholly lyrical in its melancholy beauty. Nevertheless it is a grave defect in an epic poet to place his own sentiments in the mouth of his characters. Of the same kind are many passages,<sup>1</sup> which reflect credit on the poet's tenderness of heart, but are out of place in their heroic setting. Zumbini has noted <sup>2</sup> that the poem is steeped in a fount of tears, which are shed not only by Sophonisba and by the personified Rome, but by Scipio, his father Publius, Hannibal and the Carthaginian orators. The portraiture of the characters is faulty from a similar cause. We discern the exaggeration of the lyrist in representing his Romans as perfect saints, his Carthaginians as little better than demons. Petrarch has taken much pains with his similes, which are often of great beauty, though drawn almost exclusively from animal life. In these, perhaps, lyric poetry may legitimately trespass upon the domain of epic ; but in the *Africa* they stand too much apart and are not woven into the fabric of the composition. They are justly called "solitary beauties—flowers of the desert,"<sup>3</sup> without which the poem would lose all its beauty.

I am confident that in his later years Petrarch recognized that his *Africa* was a failure past all remedy, and that any attempt at revision would be labour thrown away. He could not bring himself to destroy the fruit of so much toil ; but since he owed his poetic crown to the mere report of its inception he had to humour the world with a promise that it should some day appear. And so, instead of resuming a work which was beyond his strength, he set himself about 1352 to compose the *Trionfi* ; in which his lyrical powers would find legitimate scope. His return to Italian poetry in a serious work was a tacit admission of the failure of his Latin epic ; and he was perhaps moved by the growing renown of the *Commedia*. But though he adopted the metre (the "terza

<sup>1</sup> See especially the account of the Carthaginian prisoners in Book VIII., which shows a quite modern horror of the cruelty of their treatment.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 140.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 144.

rima ") which Dante had employed with such skill, he did not attempt to rival him in a grand epic, but ventured on a kind of composition of which the spirit, if not the form, is altogether lyrical. It is most interesting to observe that the scheme underlying the *Trionfi* finds its germ in a passage of the *Africa* on the fleeting nature of fame <sup>1</sup>—a passage which he makes St. Augustine commend in the *Secret*.<sup>2</sup> Thus the conflict between earthly glory and Divine grace, which was to outlast his life, is seen not only in the "swan-song" of his philosophy, but even in the early poem, which was to be his passport to fame.

How great that fame already was in his native land through his Italian poems is illustrated by an incident <sup>3</sup> of this studious winter at Parma in 1341-1342. A blind native of Perugia, who kept a school of Convenevole's type at Pontremoli, a little town on the western slope of the Apennines, had been so fired with the beauty of the poet's sonnets that, on hearing he had gone to the court at Naples, he set out thither on foot under his son's guidance, in order to solicit an interview. He arrived some time in the summer of 1341; and when the King heard of his visit, he sent for him and informed him that Petrarch had gone to Rome, and that he must follow in his footsteps at once, if he wished to catch him before his return to France. "If my life is spared," he replied, "I would follow him to the Indies." Robert was delighted with his enthusiasm and ordered that he should have provision for his journey. On reaching Rome, he found that the poet had departed, no one knew whither; so he could only return sadly to the labours of his school. During the following winter he heard to his joy that Petrarch was at Parma, less than fifty miles away across the mountains; he therefore sent him a "tolerable" sonnet,<sup>4</sup> with a letter announcing his own speedy

<sup>1</sup> It is in Lib. II. 428-434, where Publius Scipio speaks of the death of a man's body as the first death, the perishing of the material memorials of him as the second, and the oblivion of his fame as the third.

<sup>2</sup> B. ed. p. 413.

<sup>3</sup> The incident is related by P. in a letter of his old age to Donnino da Piacenza—*Sen.* XVI. 7 (Frac.) of May 12, 1373. He there says that he had only recently heard the Neapolitan part of the story.

<sup>4</sup> "Præmissis ad me haud ineptis aliquot versiculis." We may presume that it was a sonnet, and perhaps the one ("La santa fama") published in the *Giunta* of early editions, to which S. 20 is a reply. A. Solerti, in his *Rime disperse di F. P. o a lui attribuite* (Florence, 1909) prints (ii. pp. 114-121) four more sonnets of Stramazzo with replies by P. in corresponding rhymes, three of them from a MS. at Bologna University. I do not know whether the P. sonnets are considered genuine.



arrival. In due time, with the help of his son and a favourite pupil, he crossed the snowy pass of Cento Croci and, descending the valley of the Taro to the plain, presented himself at Petrarch's door. His appearance was rather staggering, for his face, with its sightless eyes, "was the colour of a bronze statue"; and he proceeded to "kiss the head which had produced such noble thoughts" and fervently to shake "the hand which had committed them to paper."<sup>1</sup> The visit lasted three days, and created such a stir in the town that Petrarch's acquaintances gathered to inspect the new-comer. On a remark by the latter that he hoped he was not wearisome to him, but that he had travelled a long way to gain the pleasure of "seeing" the poet, there was a general laugh; but the schoolmaster appealed to Petrarch to say whether, after his close interview, he had not seen him better than many of those who had eyes. Azzo in particular was charmed with the visitor's naïve admiration and sent him away loaded with presents. If we may trust the conjecture of an early biographer,<sup>2</sup> the schoolmaster's name was Andrea Stramazzo of Perugia, otherwise called Muzio, to whom Petrarch addressed the twentieth sonnet of the *Canzoniere*.

During this sojourn at Parma Petrarch sustained in quick succession three great losses by the deaths of his earliest patron the Bishop of Lombez, his chief University friend Tommaso da Caloria, and his confessor Dionisio, Bishop of Monopoli. To his affectionate nature each blow was severe; and perhaps he never afterwards recovered the youthful elasticity of mind, which distinguishes his earlier letters. Writing in January, 1342,<sup>3</sup> he says that at this period he could never receive a letter without a trembling foreboding as to the nature of its contents. Giacomo Colonna had sent him a warm invitation to come to Lombez on his return from Italy; and he was eagerly looking forward to the visit and to the opportunity of submitting the *Africa* to his

<sup>1</sup> P. adds parenthetically that at that time he had written very little (B. ed. p. 1060). He characteristically compares his visitor to the one-eyed Hannibal crossing the Alps to conquer Rome, quoting Juvenal, X.

<sup>157</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Baldelli (p. 74) quotes this as the conjecture of Lelio de' Lelli, whose biography of P. (still apparently unpublished) was written about 1530 and exists in MS. at Florence. Carducci, in his annotation of S. 20 (*op. cit.* p. 8), accepts the conjecture and states that in some MSS. Stramazzo is called Muzio or Andrea da Perugia.

<sup>3</sup> F. IV. 12 of January 5, 1342 (Frac. I. 228).

friend's criticism and advice.<sup>1</sup> During the summer he had heard disquieting rumours that the Bishop was in poor health, and he was anxious for further news. One night in September he dreamed that he was in his garden and saw the Bishop, unattended, about to cross the streamlet at the bottom. Petrarch eagerly approached and plied him with a fire of questions as to his destination and why he was alone. Giacomo smiled in his pleasant way and said he had become as weary of the Pyrenean storms as the poet was on his visit to Lombez, and that he was now on his way to Rome with the intention of never returning. He was moving quickly and had reached the bridge with the poet close at his heels, when suddenly he turned and in a changed voice said, as he gently pressed him back, "Stay, I cannot have you with me now." At these words Petrarch gazed at him intently, and seeing the pallor of death on his brow, uttered a loud cry and awoke. With a sad presentiment he carefully noted the date of this remarkable dream and described it to his friends. Twenty-five days later he received news of the Bishop's death, which took place on the very day of the dream.

Here we have a story which deserves a place in the records of the Society for Psychical Research. Petrarch tells it, so far as we can gather, within four years of the event<sup>2</sup>; and he is careful to add that at the time he had no idea that there was any intention of transferring the Bishop's remains to Rome, which was done, nevertheless, about three years after his death. The dream would be classed, we presume, among the numerous cases of telepathic appearance on the day of death, and in the opinion of some would be sufficiently explained by the poet's anxiety as to his friend's condition. The first question generally asked of the percipient of such a vision is whether he had had any previous experience of the same kind; and in this very letter Petrarch relates another of his dreams, which was premonitory, not of death, but of recovery. One of his earliest and dearest friends (he gives no name) was at death's door, and the physicians had given up his case as hopeless. The poet himself, worn out with

<sup>1</sup> *F. IV. 13*, to Lælius (undated).

<sup>2</sup> The story is in *F. V. 7* to Giovanni D'Andrea (*Frac. I. 276-278*), which is almost certainly of December 27, 1344. Fracassetti suggests 1343; but this would not allow for the three years that elapsed before the removal of the Bishop's remains to Rome. Of course that passage may have been added in 1359.

anxiety, had sunk into a troubled sleep, and in this state saw his sick friend beside him—a vision which made him utter a cry of distress loud enough to awake his companions, who, finding him still asleep, decided to let him get what rest he could. The sick man seemed to wipe away his tears, and then said, “Our talk will be disturbed in a moment—tell him who comes not to give up hope; be sure I shall not die of this complaint unless I am left alone.” At this point the dream was broken by a loud knock at the door; and one of the physicians, a great friend of them both, appeared at the poet’s bedside to persuade him to moderate his grief. Petrarch then adjured him solemnly not to leave his sick friend while life remained. When the doctor replied frankly that it was God’s work, not his, to bring back a dying man, Petrarch told him his dream and with difficulty persuaded him to go back to his patient. On his return he confessed that there was a ray of hope; and before long the sick man made a complete recovery. In relating these stories to the famous canonist, Giovanni d’Andrea, who had been tutor to the Bishop of Lombez and a great admirer of his character, the poet says, with his usual good sense, that these coincidences had not made him pin his faith to dreams in general, but that his visions of what he most feared and most desired had chanced in each case to be confirmed by the result.

The exact date of the Bishop’s death is not known, but it must have been about the middle of September, 1341<sup>1</sup>; and the news must have reached Petrarch—if his time-estimate be correct<sup>2</sup>—before the middle of October. Yet his long letter<sup>3</sup> of condolence to the Cardinal is dated as late as January 5, 1342. He seems to have been aware that he should have written sooner,<sup>4</sup> but intimates that he had shrunk from the task through grief, and his despair of finding words adequate to express it. The

<sup>1</sup> A successor was appointed on October 1, and as these appointments were generally made at once (see above, Vol. I. p. 372), and the news would take about ten days to arrive at Avignon, the above conjecture is probable.

<sup>2</sup> Twenty-five days seems a short time for the news to travel from Lombez (cf. the forty-three days—April 6 to May 19—for the news of “Laura’s” death from Avignon), but an express courier might perhaps have done it.

<sup>3</sup> *F.* IV. 12.

<sup>4</sup> He instances the mocking reply of Tiberius to envoys of Troy (arriving rather late to condole with him on the death of Germanicus) that he sympathized with them in the loss of their countryman Hector (Suetonius, *Tib.* cap. 52).



letter is too long to be quoted entire <sup>1</sup> ; but it is a worthy tribute of affection to his friend, and shows a delicate consideration for the feelings of his patron.<sup>2</sup> He takes a short survey of the Bishop's life, mentioning incidentally that in a recent letter then in his own possession, sent him by the Cardinal for him to compose a Latin reply,<sup>3</sup> Giacomo had taken a solemn oath that he wished for no higher preferment,<sup>4</sup> but was eager to remain in the secluded sphere, in which Pope John had placed him. Yet Petrarch expresses his conviction that he would have been promoted even against his will but for the envy felt towards him by some members of the Curia. The poet has now heard of the Cardinal's projected removal of his brother's body to Rome, upon which he forbears to express an opinion, "lest I should seem to grudge him either to the city whose citizen I am or to the church of which I am a canon" ; but he is sure that if Lombez retains him, it will never have a securer title to fame. Though composed with unusual care, this is far from being a mere "duty letter," couched in conventional terms ; he writes with extreme respect, but with the freedom born of familiar intimacy. To Lælius at Lombez he wrote <sup>5</sup> in acute distress that he could not decide on his own future course. Should he join him in weeping at the tomb of their common friend, or return to the Cardinal's sad company at Avignon, and "kiss the barbaric hands of the proud Pontiff?" But in his own sorrow he does not forget that Lælius, from his constant attendance on the Bishop, was the chief loser by his death.

"After the tears of his father and brothers, I am sure that none will flow more freely than yours. This I know, from your kindness of heart and your old hereditary devotion, which has drawn you to follow his footsteps so far from your father's home."

It appears that Lælius was rewarded for his fidelity by being taken, at least for a time, into the Cardinal's familiar circle.

<sup>1</sup> Some passages are translated at the end of this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> The style is unusually good, as is the case when P. takes special pains ; I do not know why de Sade (II. 31) should call the grounds of his consolation "alembiqués" (far-fetched).

<sup>3</sup> This is an interesting indication that P.'s secretarial duties continued even during his frequent absences.

<sup>4</sup> De Sade states (II. 30), without giving his authority, that on the vacancy of the patriarchate of Aquileia the nobles and people were anxious for Giacomo's appointment, but that he declined the suggestion.

<sup>5</sup> F. IV. 13.

It was probably during the same autumn<sup>1</sup> that he heard of the death of his old University friend, Tommaso da Caloria, at Messina. So far as we know, they had not met for more than fifteen years, but they had kept up a brisk correspondence<sup>2</sup> on literary topics; they both wrote Italian poetry and may have exchanged their poems for mutual criticism. Writing to Pellegrino Caloria, who had asked him for an epitaph<sup>3</sup> on his brother, Petrarch says: "We were of the same age and disposition; we had the same objects and pursuits; in short we were one—in toil, in hope, in purpose<sup>4</sup>—would that we could have died together!" In a later letter to Giacomo,<sup>5</sup> another brother, he says that the sad news gave him a violent fever,<sup>6</sup> which seemed to him opportune and made him long for death. He recovered against his will; and though Seneca would have told him that the remedy lay in his own hand, he disapproves of that philosopher's views on suicide and prefers, with the Psalmist, to regard his soul as in his own hand.<sup>7</sup> The lines which he sends at Pellegrino's request, are ten elegiacs, gracefully expressed, but too gloomy for a Christian poet. Many years later he gave his friend an honoured place in the procession of Italian and Provençal poets in his *Trionfi*,<sup>8</sup> and mourned his too early death. No poem of Tommaso has come down to us, except a sonnet asking how he fared with his "Laura," along with Petrarch's similarly rhymed reply. Though but recently published<sup>9</sup> and not included in the *Canzoniere*, both may fairly be considered genuine.

It was during this stay at Parma, either in the autumn or winter,<sup>10</sup> that Petrarch heard of the death in the royal palace at

<sup>1</sup> The date is not known. According to de Sade (II. 24) Tommaso had just returned from visiting Giacomo Colonna at Lombez. The statement is strange, for there is no proof of any relations between them.

<sup>2</sup> We have nine letters of P. to him, and the early folios attribute twenty-two more to the same addressee—in most cases certainly by error. (See *Frac. It.* i. 262.)

<sup>3</sup> *F.* IV. 10. P. calls it "epigramma," which, though sometimes "an inscription," is not the word for an epitaph. Nor do the lines (except perhaps the first) suggest an epitaph, for there is no comprehensive eulogy of the dead.

<sup>4</sup> I adopt the reading of the Colbertin MS. at Paris.

<sup>5</sup> *F.* IV. 11.

<sup>6</sup> Doubtless the illness referred to in the *Secret*. See above, p. 175.

<sup>7</sup> *Ps.* CXIX. 109. P. has misunderstood the Hebrew image.

<sup>8</sup> *Tr. d'Am.* iii. (iv. in the old order) 59-63.

<sup>9</sup> They were first published by Matranga from a Vatican MS. in 1854; lately by A. Solerti, in his *Rime disperse di F. P.* ii. pp. 122, 123.

<sup>10</sup> I express no opinion on the vexed question of the date of D.'s death.

Naples of his old friend and confessor, Dionisio, Bishop of Monopoli. He knew well how great was his debt to the friar-bishop for his introduction to the King; and he therefore dispatched to the latter a verse-panegyric <sup>1</sup> upon his friend, which concludes with an epitaph of eight hexameters, written perhaps at Robert's request. It is not known whether they were ever inscribed on the tomb. This is one of the shortest of Petrarch's epitaphs, of which we have several; the verses, though elegant and compressed, are marred by an unfortunate jingle in the last line.<sup>2</sup> In the letters he speaks of the Bishop as his "second (and a most indulgent) father," and regards his death as a loss to Italy and the world, but most of all to Robert, of whose favourite study of astrology he was the companion and guide.

"What comrade will you find  
To unlock the secrets of the stars and fate,  
War's doubtful issue to presage, and mark  
The fortunes of great captains" <sup>3</sup>?

Petrarch has been freely blamed <sup>4</sup> for thus exalting Dionisio, as the professor of a science, whose false pretensions he himself despised.<sup>5</sup> If indeed he was feigning a belief in astrology in order to please the King, he would deserve this censure. But we have no proof that he had yet formed an opinion on the subject; and even if he had, he was now trying to estimate the King's loss in Dionisio's death, and was not expressing any views of his own. His native tact would have made him shrink from striking a jarring note in the midst of his eulogy.

Other friends at Naples sent him a budget of letters on January 30, 1342—among them the courtier, Giovanni Barili, who affectionately expressed his deep mortification at his absence from the Capitoline ceremony. The poet sat down and wrote

De Sade (II. 34) and Rossetti (III. 159) fix it on January 14, 1342, and Fracassetti (*It.* i. 425) on August 14 of the same year. Della Torre (*Giovinezza del Boccaccio*, p. 146)—relying on a letter of B. said to be of August 28, 1341, which speaks of D. as dead—would place the death several months earlier. But Hortis (*Sulle Op. Lat. del B.* p. 315, n.) thinks this letter spurious and others who accept it would date it in 1342.

<sup>1</sup> *Ep. Metr.* I. xiii.

<sup>2</sup> "Unicus ex mille [*sic*] jacet hic Dionysius ille."

<sup>3</sup> Dionisio is said by Villani (*Chron.* X. 86) to have won fame by predicting the sudden death in 1328 of Castruccio Castracani, the Ghibelline general.

<sup>4</sup> Principally by Fracassetti (*It.* i. 425 and *Adnot. in F. P.* p. 59).

<sup>5</sup> His chief letters on the subject are *F.* III. 8 (translated in Vol. I. pp. 455-459 where see note), *Sen.* I. 7, and *Sen.* III. 1.



off at once (he says in an hour!) the verse-letter of 100 lines<sup>1</sup> describing the crowning, to which we referred in the last chapter. He put the lines away for revision at his leisure, when on the following day, to his dismay, the messenger presented himself and demanded the reply, as he was returning at once. Petrarch says<sup>2</sup> that for the moment he was at a loss what to do, but finally decided that Barili's affection, like Pollio's,<sup>3</sup> would pardon a "country-bred" effort; he therefore sent off his verses as they were, with a dutiful message to the King, expressing his eager desire to return to Naples as soon as might be. In the poem he sends a similar, but more devoted assurance that the *Africa* is daily growing under the shadow of his great name, and that he will present him with it when "our Gaul"<sup>4</sup> has ceased to detain him in its "gentle fetters." Whether he ever really intended to pay this visit before his return to Avignon is extremely doubtful.

We know neither the month nor the exact circumstances of his departure from Parma. But a phrase in his long letter to Urban V.<sup>5</sup> of June 29, 1366, implies that it was not primarily the result of pressure from the Cardinal<sup>6</sup> but of an urgent message from his friends in Rome, who begged him to hasten to Avignon and support the embassy which they were sending to entreat the new Pope to return to his capital. Benedict XII., as already related,<sup>7</sup> passed away somewhat suddenly on April 25, 1342. The Conclave assembled in the Dominican convent on May 3, and four days later (May 7)<sup>8</sup> unanimously elected Pierre Roziers,<sup>9</sup> Archbishop

<sup>1</sup> *Ep. Metr.* II. 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Var.* 57.

<sup>3</sup> Virgil, *Ecl.* III. 85.

<sup>4</sup> This phrase led Rossetti's commentator to suppose that the lines were written at Avignon; but P. is of course referring to "Cisalpine Gaul," in which Parma is situated. The "gentle fetters" are not those of "Laura," but of Azzo.

<sup>5</sup> *Sen.* VII. 1 (single epistle). The phrase is "dum post annos super rebus Italicis, pro quibus *ab Italia* missus eram, Clementem VI. alloquerer." The phrase is rather grandiloquent, but it must mean that he "left Italy" as a sort of delegate on Italian affairs.

<sup>6</sup> The metrical letter to Barbato (III. xix.), in which P. says he is compelled to return to Avignon, was dated by de Sade (II. 37) in 1342 and the compulsion ascribed to the Cardinal. Cochin (*Chron. du Canz.* p. 106, n.) unaccountably takes the same view. But its contents prove indisputably (as Rossetti's commentary shows) that it belongs to 1362. See also Diana Magrini (*op. cit.*), pp. 153-155.

<sup>7</sup> See above, Vol. I. p. 411.

<sup>8</sup> Mollat, p. 81. Some authors wrongly give the date May 6.

<sup>9</sup> In almost all histories his family name is given "Roger," but André (*Histoire de la Papauté*, Avignon, 1857) proves (pp. 272, 273, n.) that the

of Rouen, who took the name of Clement VI. On the first news of Benedict's death King Philip had despatched his son, the Duke of Normandy, to Avignon to recommend the Archbishop; and though arriving too late for the election, he found that the Cardinals had anticipated his father's wishes. Their choice seems to have been dictated by two paramount motives—the desire to substitute for a rigorous ascetic an able and courtly man of the world, and the hope that by electing one, who was a *persona grata* in France and also well-known in England,<sup>1</sup> they might promote a peace between the contending kingdoms. Both motives are intelligible; but the discord fermenting in Italy—the country for which the Pope was primarily responsible—might have suggested a wiser course. The moment was not auspicious for choosing a warm French partisan; and if the French majority could have foregone their claims as such and elected a neutral Italian, it would have been better for the peace of the world. But the threatening state of affairs in Italy was perhaps the very reason why they would not elect a Pope, who might force them to return to Rome.

On Whit-Sunday (May 19) the new Pope was crowned in the Dominican Church; and the ceremony of the “cavalcata” from this church to the Papal Palace was conducted with unexampled magnificence. The stirrups and bridle of the Pope, who wore (for the first time) the triple tiara, were held by the Dukes of Normandy, Bourbon, and Burgundy and the Dauphin of Vienne. The brilliant display was a foretaste of the gay times in store for the Provençal city in the next ten years.

Clement VI., who was in his fifty-first year, was in many respects a striking contrast to his predecessor. Like him, he was a monk, having become a Cluniac Benedictine in the Abbey of Chaiaie-Dieu at the age of ten years; but, unlike him, he was of good lineage—the son of a country gentleman in the Limousin, and he belonged to a less severe order, which did not grudge its members the advantages of a superior education. In recognition of his great abilities he was sent as a youth to the University of Paris, where he became Doctor of Theology at thirty, and soon

family château of Maumont is in or near the commune of Roziers, and that in French documents his name is “Rozier,” never “Roger.”

<sup>1</sup> Pierre visited England in 1328 to render homage to Edward III. for his abbey of Fécamp. He bore an invitation to Edward to pay homage to Philip for his French possessions (Ramsay, *Genesis of Lancaster*, I. 200).

after Provisor of the Sorbonne. His gifts as a preacher and orator attracted early notice at court, and his advance was extraordinarily rapid. After presiding over four communities of his order,<sup>1</sup> he became in quick succession Bishop of Arras and Archbishop of Sens and of Rouen; and having meanwhile been raised by Philip to the post of Chancellor of France, he attained the Cardinalate in 1338. His learning was chiefly theological, and he had the gift of seizing and assimilating much information gained by the labours of others.<sup>2</sup> Petrarch says that his memory was so extraordinary as to retain everything that he heard or read, adding the marvel (according to popular report) that this faculty was the result of a blow on the top of the head, of which the Pope still bore the scar.<sup>3</sup> His moral qualities, like his intellectual, shone best upon the surface. He was kindly, affable, industrious and accessible to all; and his favourite maxim was that "no one should retire dissatisfied from the presence of his prince." One of his first acts is said to have been to invite claimants to benefices to send in their applications within two months; and the number is said to have reached 100,000.<sup>4</sup> He contrived to satisfy a large proportion of these by extending his right of "reserve" and by freely invading the privileges of lay-patrons.<sup>5</sup> So open-handed was his generosity that in a short time the immense hoards of his two predecessors melted away. Though outwardly attentive to his religious duties and to the demands of public policy, he was fundamentally a man of pleasure, who gave a secular tinge to the whole atmosphere of his court. In this respect Clement has been fitly compared to Leo X.,<sup>6</sup> whom he rivalled in worldliness, if not in intellectual power. He kept a large and well-appointed stud of horses; and he was extremely fond of the society of ladies, who mingled freely in the crowds

<sup>1</sup> The priories of Pantaleon and of Saint Baudil (near Nîmes) and the abbeys of Fécamp and of Chaise-Dieu.

<sup>2</sup> *F. VIII.* 6 (*Frac. I.* 436). Writing to a correspondent, who had compiled a dictionary of St. Augustine, P. there speaks of Clement as "litteratissimo sed occupatissimo homini, atque ob id talium compendiorum avidissimo."

<sup>3</sup> *Rer. Mem. Lib. II.* cap. i. (B. ed. p. 460).

<sup>4</sup> The chronicler Pierre de Herenthals in Baluze (*t. i.*).

<sup>5</sup> On some one objecting to these encroachments as novel, Clement exclaimed, "My predecessors knew not how to be Pope" (*ibid.*).

<sup>6</sup> André (*op. cit.*), pp. 270-271. The Abbé Christophe (*ii.* 85) naïvely remarks that this disposition, though offensive to modern ideas, was not "found inconvenient" in the aristocratic fourteenth century.



which thronged his halls of reception. His favourite, Cecilia, Viscountess of Turenne, whom scandal asserted to have been his mistress, is said to have gained a preponderating influence—some say by actual sale<sup>1</sup>—in the disposal of preferments. Such was the Pontiff, who succeeded the austere Benedict; and the influence of such a court could hardly tend to improve the moral tone of the city.

Of Clement's general administration we shall speak in two future chapters<sup>2</sup>; at present we have only to deal with his attitude towards the forsaken city of his See. Benedict had made his Senatorship of Rome for life something of a reality by appointing deputies equally from the contending parties and by using his spiritual censures to repress uprisings of the people. But his office expired with his death; and the new Pope was wholly ignorant of Rome and of Roman ways.<sup>3</sup> The citizens, however, unanimously determined to request him, according to precedent, to be Senator for life—not as Pope, but in his private capacity; and they appointed a deputation of eighteen—six from the nobles, six from the burghers and six from the plebs—to convey this request and to entreat him to return to his See. It was long asserted with confidence<sup>4</sup> that Petrarch and the subsequently famous Rienzi were of the number of these chosen deputies—the former in the second, the latter presumably in the third class. But the names are preserved in the Papal Registers,<sup>5</sup> and neither of them appears in the list. Of the nobles three were Orsini, two Colonna and one an Annibaldi (Jacopo); and Stefano Colonna—the younger, not the elder<sup>6</sup>—was apparently the leader. The other classes were respectively headed by Francesco of Vico, son of the hereditary City-Prefect, and by Lello di Cosecchis—possibly a relation of “Lælius”—who is

<sup>1</sup> Matteo Villani, Lib. III. 43.

<sup>2</sup> See below, Chaps. XVII. and XXV.

<sup>3</sup> His answer to the Romans about the Senatorship (Joudou, ii. 242) shows that he was unaware that the offer to him as an individual, not as Pope, was customary.

<sup>4</sup> The assertion was first made by de Sade (t. II. 46) who is followed by Rossetti and Fracassetti. Gregorovius (VI. Pt. i. 224–227) is the first to state the facts correctly.

<sup>5</sup> Carlo Cipolla, “Note Petrarchesche desunte dall' Archivio Vaticano” in *Memorie della Reale Accad. di Torino*, Series II. t. 59 (1909).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* and Gregorovius (*loc. cit.*). Christophe (t. ii. 88) and Okey (*Avignon*, p. 95) say that it was the elder, but he was too old for such an embassy.

called the city-syndic or attorney. Though we have no direct evidence, it is a fair conjecture that Petrarch, as a Roman citizen, was requested by Stefano to support them unofficially by his advocacy, and that this is the meaning of his rather exaggerated statement that he was "sent from Italy" for the purpose.<sup>1</sup> Rossetti asserts<sup>2</sup> that the poet's verse-letter to Clement of 270 hexameters<sup>3</sup> is really the harangue, which he delivered in person to the Pope and cardinals on the occasion. But it is not conceivable either that he was the chief spokesman or that an imaginative effort of the kind would be patiently heard in a business assembly. At their reception the deputies made three definite requests: 1. That the Pope, as Pierre Roziere, would accept the post of Senator for life; 2. That he would restore the Papacy to Rome; 3. That he would consent to the Jubilee being celebrated there not only in the century-year, but at the half-century—that is, in 1350. Petrarch's production says nothing of the first request, but deals at length with the two last—a fairly conclusive proof that while the poem was not "official," it was written at the instance of the deputies and with a full knowledge of their proposals. The Pope gave no answer at the first audience; but the deputies would doubtless be invited to hand in documents in support of their plea, among which the poem would be included.

In these lines Petrarch speaks as before in the person of Rome, the deserted matron, humbly entreating her spouse to return to her arms. But his treatment of the metaphor is quite different and more tactful than in his previous effusion to Benedict. He had perhaps been warned to avoid classical allusions; for Clement was not a scholar of that type. He does so, however, with a covert sigh, because he knows that the glorious triumphs of Rome's "lesser spouse" would have no effect upon the Pontiff's mind.<sup>4</sup> Yet he cannot quite refrain, since he recalls the legendary vision<sup>5</sup> of the Infant Christ shown to Augustus

<sup>1</sup> See above, n. 5, p. 191.

<sup>2</sup> *Poemata Minora F. P.* (Trieste, 1829-1834), t. iii. p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Ep. Metr.* II. v.

<sup>4</sup> Ll. 123-127. The "sponsus minor" is, of course, the Emperor, as in the former poem.

<sup>5</sup> The legend is in the *Mirabilia Urbis Romæ* (Nicholls' translation, pp. 35, 90), where it is said that the Church of St. Mary on the Capitol was called "Ara Cæli" from the vision appearing on its site (see *F.* VI, 2).

by the Sibyl on the Capitol; and he imagines the Emperor, in an address to the Holy Child, anticipating that from that spot laws will still be given to the world, and haughty kings and captains held in restraint. Shall this pious prescience of the world-sovereign be proved baseless? He reminds the Pope that it was Rome, which through Vespasian and Titus inflicted punishment upon the Jews for their murder of the Son of God<sup>1</sup>; and he recalls the justice of Trajan, who, when his army was ready, delayed his march in order to redress the wrongs of a poor widow.<sup>2</sup> The traditional dialogue between the Emperor and his petitioner is given verbatim, as it is by Dante<sup>3</sup>; and it is suggested that a Christian Pontiff should be as prompt to right wrongs as the Pagan Emperor, and not leave the task to his successor. "Neglected Rome" gives a long catalogue of her most precious relics—among them a picture, evidently seen by the poet in the little half-ruined chapel of "Quo Vadis" on the Appian Way, representing the well known legend of the Saviour with His Cross meeting Saint Peter, as he fled from the city. If the great Apostle freely returned to Rome, though he knew that torture and death awaited him, will not the Pope find courage to do the same, when he will be received with the highest honour, and a splendid prospect lies open for his future? It is an ingenious argument *a fortiori*; but the French Popes, remembering the fate of Boniface, were prone to regard the offer as a trap. Yet it was a bold step of the poet to insist on the strong contrast between the courage of Saint Peter and the timidity of his successors. The "distressed matron" tells the Pope that she knows well the fickle loves of the vulgar—how they eagerly seize upon the new and forsake one whom they have long possessed; but she hopes better things from so great a man as Clement. At

In *Rev. Mem.* IV. iii. (B. ed. p. 524), P. says that the name of the Sibyl was Albunea, but this he derives from classical sources.

<sup>1</sup> Ll. 145-149.

<sup>2</sup> This legend is first related in the eighth century by Paulus Diaconus (Rossetti absurdly says "John Damascenus") in his life of St. Gregory, afterwards in the Golden Legend and by John of Salisbury (*Policraticus*, V. 8). De Rossi supposes that Gregory had the idea from some sculpture, representing a suppliant nation. At his prayer Trajan was said to have been restored to life, baptized, and then transferred from Hell to Paradise (cf. Dante, *Par.* XX. 43-48, 106-117). If P. took the story from the *Mirabilia* (*op. cit.* p. 14), he has suppressed the embellishment that the culprit was Trajan's son, for he would know that he had none.

<sup>3</sup> *Purg.* X. 73-93. Dante may have taken it from the *Fiore dei Filosofi*, attributed to Brunetto Latini,



least he will restore her ruined churches—the damage caused by the fire at St. John Lateran,<sup>1</sup> as well as the tottering arches and fallen statues in the church which gave him his Cardinal's title.<sup>2</sup> The last thirty lines of the poem deal with the request for the half-century Jubilee. Petrarch reminds the Pope that the Jews' Jubilee was every fiftieth year,<sup>3</sup> and adds that since few people live to the age of a hundred, men need a plenary absolution at more frequent intervals, for death may come in the twinkling of an eye. The remonstrance is well conceived and remarkable for its freedom of speech; but the passage commending the relics is disproportionately long.<sup>4</sup>

The formal answer is said to have been deferred for two months,<sup>5</sup> which must have been inconvenient for the deputies; and when at length it came, it contained the usual plea for delay. Clement accepted the Senatorship for life—saving the rights of the Roman See—and he granted the request as to the Jubilee, on which he issued a Bull in the following January.<sup>6</sup> He assured the deputies that no one was more anxious than he to restore the Papacy to Rome, but the proper moment had not yet come. The war between France and England menaced the security of Christendom; till that quarrel was composed, he must remain north of the Alps. The sincerity of this declaration may be measured by the fact that he at once began to make large additions to the buildings of Benedict at the Papal Palace, to which Petrarch had sarcastically alluded in his poem,<sup>7</sup> as an effective negative to his former appeal.

But the Pope, courteous and urbane to all men, was particularly gracious to his poetic petitioner. He admitted him to a private audience and listened with patience to his strong representations in favour of Rome. When Petrarch ventured

<sup>1</sup> The fire took place in 1308, and the building was restored by John XXII., but, it would seem, insufficiently.

<sup>2</sup> This was the church of SS. Nercus and Achillas, which, according to a note in Rossetti's MS., was near the Baths of Caracalla.

<sup>3</sup> Such is the plain statement of Lev. xxv. 10, 11; but some think that the Jubilee was the forty-ninth—i.e. the seventh sabbatical year from the previous Jubilee.

<sup>4</sup> De Sade (II. 52) trenchantly remarks that P. would have had more success with Clement, if he had enlarged on the worldly advantages of Rome.

<sup>5</sup> Such is the statement of de Sade (II. 46), but he gives no authority.

<sup>6</sup> The Bull "Unigenitus Dei Filius" of January 27, 1343.

<sup>7</sup> Ll. 15, 16.

to say that the Italians would give much for his Holiness to possess as great a knowledge of Italy as he had of France and Britain, Clement politely replied that he desired it no less eagerly himself.<sup>1</sup> Nor did he forget the Laureate in his lavish distribution of preferments. On October 7, 1342, he issued letters appointing him to the priorate of Migliarino in the marshes close to Pisa; and in those letters he expressly states<sup>2</sup> that he gave the appointment of his mere liberality, without any solicitation from the beneficiary or his friends, on account of Petrarch's great knowledge of letters and high moral character.

It is strange enough that the Pope was after all granting to the subject of this encomium what was not his to give. The benefice—chosen, no doubt, because it was a sinecure—had not reverted to the Pope by lapse, as he had been led to suppose. There was a saving clause in the deed of appointment, “provided that no special right has been acquired over the benefice,” and this unfortunately turned out to be the case. The last holder had died in the previous year (April 22, 1341—the very week when the poet was last in Pisa). The seven lay-patrons appointed on August 12—just before the four months' grace expired—a relative of one of their own number.<sup>3</sup> But when the nominee applied to Salsarelli, Archbishop of Pisa, for confirmation of his election, it was refused at the instance of a Papal sub-legate in Tuscany. There was, of course, an appeal, the hearing of which was unduly delayed by the deaths of the Archbishop and Pope Benedict; and Petrarch was appointed by Clement under the false impression that the benefice was vacant. When the appeal was brought before the auditors of the Camera Apostolica, it was allowed; and though Petrarch applied for a new trial under a Papal Commission, the first judgment was upheld. These facts were discovered half a century ago,<sup>4</sup> but have not yet appeared in any life of Petrarch.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Sen.* VII. 1 (B. ed. p. 904).

<sup>2</sup> See the text in de Sade (*Pièces Justificatives*, No. XXI.), t. iii. (append.), p. 54.

<sup>3</sup> The patrons—a kind of Board of Trustees—left the choice to Francesco del Nicchio, one of their number, who appointed Lotto Marino del Nicchio.

<sup>4</sup> See P. Paganini, “Delle relazioni di F. P. con Pisa,” in *Atti della Reale Accademia Lucchese*, XXI. 169–216, 1875, reprinted separately at Lucca in 1881.

<sup>5</sup> The recent lives by G. Finzi (1900) H. C. Hollway-Calthrop (1907),

The issue of the litigation left our poet with a strong claim upon the Pope's bounty ; and the discoverer of the above facts found also an important document in the Cathedral archives of Pisa, which seems to show that the claim was soon acknowledged, It is a deed, executed by Petrarch at Avignon on September 1. 1352, in which he appoints a Pisan merchant named Ugolino Martelli as his " proctor " to receive the revenues of his canonry at Pisa. That this was not a benefice recently conferred is proved by the fact that the poet is styled " olim canonicus," and that he expressly says he does not revoke the powers hitherto exercised by other proctors on his behalf. It seems probable that this much higher dignity was bestowed upon him soon after the failure of his other appointment. We know that in 1352 he held four benefices <sup>1</sup> ; and Fracasetti's list of them <sup>2</sup> has to be corrected by the substitution of the canonry of Pisa for the Migliarino priorate.

We have scarcely a single prose letter of Petrarch which can be placed with certainty in the first twelve months after his return to Avignon. He may have paid occasional visits to his hermitage at Vacluse ; but we know from an allusion in a later letter <sup>3</sup> that he must have spent this summer almost entirely at Avignon. Soon after the accession of Clement, the Basilian monk Barlaam was again seen in Avignon, but this time in a far different and less public capacity <sup>4</sup> than that assumed on his former visit. Then he came as the commissioned agent of the Eastern Emperor, seeking the Pope's aid, but freely using independent language on behalf of the Eastern Church. Now he appears almost as a fugitive—in disgrace with his master for joining the communion of Rome. He seems to have been of a

and Mrs. Jerrold (1909), all repeat the statements of de Sade and Fracasetti.

<sup>1</sup> *F.* XIV. 4 (to Luca Cristiano), of October 19, 1352. He was then offered another canonry at Modena, which he resigned in favour of his correspondent. In 1365 Urban V. was about to offer him one at Carpentras, but on receiving false news of his death, conferred it upon another.

<sup>2</sup> (*It.*) iii. 312. He reckons the canonry at Lombez (1335), the priorate near Pisa (1342), the canonry at Parma (1346) united with the arch-deaconry (1350), and the canonry at Padua (1349).

<sup>3</sup> See *F.* XVIII. 2 (quoted below), and also *Ep. Metr.* III. i. 36.

<sup>4</sup> I cannot imagine why M. de Nolhac (*P. et L'Hum.* ii. 135, cf. also his " *P. et Barlaam*," *Revue des études grecques*, t. vi.) should speak of this second visit as " a religious mission." Barlaam had definitely ruptured his relations with the court of Constantinople.



pragmatic and contentious temper, though in some sort the victim of the same controversial spirit among his fellow-Easterns. During a visit to the monasteries of Mount Athos he had been shocked by some of the doctrines of the Hesychast recluses in those communities. They professed to have enjoyed in mystic vision a view of the unearthly light which streamed upon Mount Tabor<sup>1</sup> at the Transfiguration, and which they believed—not indeed to be the Divine Essence itself—but to proceed from its active operation. We have here something like that “inner light” which fascinated the early Quakers and John Inglesant, but with this difference, that it was conceived as an objective existence revealed to the rapture of the ascetic. Some of the more fanatic monks, called Omphalopsychi, claimed to have induced the mystic vision by contemplating their own navel for days in succession. Barlaam, high in favour at court, attempted to repress these disorders in a Council at Constantinople in 1341, but found that he had raised a hornet’s nest about his ears. The Emperor died while the Council was sitting; and “the great domestic”—John Cantacuzenus, the historian—who subsequently assumed the purple, favoured Barlaam’s opponents, the Palamites.<sup>2</sup> The Council imposed silence upon both parties, but it implicitly condemned Barlaam’s doctrine that the saints cannot enjoy the Beatific Vision; and the Court went so far as to depose his supporter, the Patriarch of Constantinople. The Basilian monk therefore quitted the capital in dudgeon, retired to Naples, and joined the Western Church.

From Naples he proceeded to Avignon to make his formal submission; and his presence there suggested to his poet-acquaintance the idea of using his help to acquire a knowledge of Greek. Barlaam was anxious to prove his new-born zeal for the Papacy by writing Latin works in support of its claims<sup>3</sup>; but he needed a greater knowledge of the language, in which he did not express himself easily.<sup>4</sup> The friends decided to meet for

<sup>1</sup> Mt. Tabor was accepted then (as indeed till the last century) as the scene of the Transfiguration.

<sup>2</sup> So called from Gregory “Palamas,” the chief champion of the monks, who was afterwards made Archbishop of Thessalonica.

<sup>3</sup> He wrote a treatise in Greek in favour of the Papal supremacy, which he dedicated to a certain Franciscus. G. A. Mandalari, in his *Fra Barlaam Calabrese, maestro del P.* (Rome, 1888), suggests that this was P.; but there is no reason why P. should receive the dedication of a theological work. Others fix upon a Crimean bishop named Francesco.

<sup>4</sup> See *F.* XVIII. 2 (below). The idea of Lo Parco (*P. et Barlaam*,

daily lessons, in which Petrarch was to improve Barlaam's Latin, while the Abbot was to instruct him in the rudiments of Greek. Our poet had acquired—we know not how, but certainly in France <sup>1</sup>—a manuscript containing sixteen of Plato's dialogues in Greek; and this manuscript, probably written in uncials, seems to have been used as a means of teaching him the Greek character.<sup>2</sup> Apparently he did not learn more than the uncial alphabet and the rudiments of grammar, before the lessons came to an abrupt close. The Calabrian Bishopric of Gerace—the ancient Locri—had become vacant; and Petrarch unselfishly, but successfully, exerted himself to obtain it for his teacher.<sup>3</sup> Barlaam was consecrated to this office on October 2, 1342, and soon afterwards he left Avignon for this new charge in his native country, where he died about 1348.<sup>4</sup> As Petrarch speaks more than once <sup>5</sup> of Barlaam's death destroying his last chance of acquiring Greek, he may have hoped to resume his lessons at Naples, though apparently he did not do so during his short visit there in the following year. The fullest account of these studies is given below from a letter <sup>6</sup> of January 10, 1354, to Nicolas Sigeros, another Eastern ambassador, who had fulfilled his promise of sending him a Greek Homer:

“Our friend Barlaam was taken from me by death, or to confess the truth I had previously taken him from myself. In contriving to get honour for him I did not regard my own loss;

Reggio, 1905) that P. was animated by a secret jealousy of Barlaam's great learning and wanted him out of the way, is justly scouted by de Nohac (ii. 137). The passage refers not at all to his learning, but only to his hesitating speech (lack of “*facundia*”). His written Latin is said to be fairly good; but he might be able to write correctly, though hardly to speak at all. The lessons would probably be given in Latin, not in Italian.

<sup>1</sup> *F.* XVIII. 2. It was part of his library at Vacluse, if indeed the existing catalogue of his books was not made earlier. See Book VII. (Chap. XXXIV.) below.

<sup>2</sup> This is expressly stated in the *Secretum* (Dial. II. B. ed. p. 390).

<sup>3</sup> Most writers say that P. obtained it from the Pope; Mrs. Jerrold (p. 61, n.) says from King Robert. Perhaps he used his influence in both quarters, as the King's consent would be necessary; but we must remember that all appointments to bishoprics were then “reserved” to the Holy See.

<sup>4</sup> So says Fracassetti (*It.* IV. 94) following Ughelli; de Sade says 1353, but gives no authority.

<sup>5</sup> See quotation below. He says practically the same in *Var.* 25 to Boccaccio (Frac. III. 369), *F.* XXIV. 12, and *Sen.* XI. 9, to Ugo di San Severino. Cf. also *De Sui Ips et al. Ign.*, B. ed. p. 1162.

<sup>6</sup> *F.* XVIII. 2.

and so, while I helped him to rise to the episcopate, I lost my master, under whom I had enlisted with great hope. I admit that your case is far different from mine; you could give me much, while I could see no chance of making any return. But he, while he was giving me daily instruction, used often to confess—courteously at least, if not truly—that he was reaping immense benefit from our intimacy; for, though rich beyond measure in the fund of Greek speech, he was so poor in Latin that, with all his nimbleness of wit, he was laborious in expressing his ideas. Under his auspices, then, I began timidly to set foot on his territory, while he followed me in ranging over mine, though with a firmer step. He had much more of Latin than I of Greek, for our positions were different. I was making a first start; he had gone some distance, since, born as he was in Greek Italy and choosing in advanced age the conversation and teaching of Latin, he was merely returning without difficulty to his natural tongue.”

We may perhaps doubt whether Barlaam’s learning, great as it was reputed to be, extended to the best Greek literature. His opponents describe him as a boaster and a charlatan; but Cantacuzenus, who had admitted him to friendship, testifies that he was well versed in Euclid, Aristotle, and Plato.<sup>1</sup> This probably means that his chief studies were mathematics, logic, and theology; so that Petrarch would not much increase his knowledge of Greek antiquity from his friend’s halting Latin conversation. Our poet here assumes that Latin (or its derivative, Italian) was Barlaam’s native tongue; but it seems that a sort of patois-Greek, allied to the Romaic, survived in Calabria for centuries after it was torn from the Byzantine Empire (A.D. 1053–1060). Barlaam had been so long at Constantinople that he must have mastered the forms of ancient Greek, which was still a living language at that court<sup>2</sup>; yet after the troubles of the Fourth Crusade (1204) and the intrusion of an illiterate Latin dynasty (1204–1261) the classic tradition had almost vanished from Eastern Europe.<sup>3</sup> However, whether Barlaam’s

<sup>1</sup> John Cantacuzenus, *Histories*, ii. 39, quoted in Hortis, *op. cit.* p. 499. The Greeks could then show some men of erudition, skilled in controversial fencing, but scarcely a single scholar.

<sup>2</sup> Hallam, *Literature of Europe* (cr. 8vo. ed.), i. 98. He says that a MS. of the twelfth century is the oldest known specimen of written Romaic.

<sup>3</sup> Hallam (*loc. cit.*) says that many ancient authors perished after the Fourth Crusade. He places in P.’s mouth (without reference) a statement that, after the death of Leontius Pilatus, “no one was left *in Greece*



knowledge of the classics were great or small, it was not now called into requisition. His pupil, in speaking of himself as "an elementary Grecian" <sup>1</sup> implies that he did not go beyond the alphabet and the simplest grammar; and after his preceptor had departed he had no further opportunity of prosecuting his studies.

Since the days of Charlemagne there had been no century in which Greek learning had sunk so low in the West. For a solitary student there was simply no apparatus available,<sup>2</sup> except the chance presence of some Greek or Byzantine scholar. The Council of Vienne in 1311 had indeed ordered the establishment of professorships at Avignon, Paris, Oxford, Bologna, and Salamanca; but the project remained a pious aspiration.<sup>3</sup> In the previous century, principally by the help of Greek immigrants, Robert Grosseteste of Lincoln and Roger Bacon had become fairly proficient in the language, but they left few successors, and on the Continent practically none. Petrarch was almost, if not absolutely, the first Italian student of Greek in the fourteenth century; and though Boccaccio afterwards carried his studies further,<sup>4</sup> there was no real revival of Greek till Chrysolorus set foot in Italy in 1395. According to Dr. Koerting <sup>5</sup> the

who understood Homer." This second-hand quotation is incorrect. Writing to Homer on October 10, 1360, P. says that Leontius (then alive) was the only friend remaining to Homer in Greece (*F.* XXIV. 12, *Frac.* III. 302). It was probably merely a boast of that uncouth pretender.

<sup>1</sup> "Elementarius Graius," *Var.* 25.

<sup>2</sup> It is said that John of Basingstoke—sent into Greece by Grosseteste about 1242 to learn the language—wrote on his return a grammar called "the Greek Donatus," based on one in that language (*F. S. Stevenson, Robert Grosseteste*, 1899, p. 227, quoting Matthew Paris, V. 285). But this work, which has now perished, probably did not reach the continent.

<sup>3</sup> Hallam, i. 96, 97. See, however, Christophe, *Hist. de la Papauté* (i. 26, 89), who supposes that the project was carried out.

<sup>4</sup> Giannozzo Manetti, in his life of Boccaccio (de Nolhac, ii. 135) gives P. the priority, though some (as O. Zenatti, *Dante e Firenze*, 1903, pp. 20-29) think that Boccaccio was an earlier pupil of Barlaam during his previous stay at Naples. Yet the former plainly implies the contrary in his *Gen. Deor.* XV. cap. 6. Paolo of Perugia, the royal librarian—a much greater friend of Barlaam—may have taken lessons from him at that time; and it is probable that he is "the Perugian" of whom P. speaks in *F.* XXIV. 12 (to Homer) as a lover of that poet. The ten Italians whom P. there mentions as such, may not have been Greek scholars "in esse," but only "in posse"—those whose enthusiasm for Homer was great enough to lead them to study him in the original, if the chance had offered.

<sup>5</sup> *P.'s Leben und Werke*, p. 154.

premature departure of Barlaam, enforcing Petrarch's abandonment of Greek, was a European calamity. The consequence, he says, was the permanent foundation of culture on Roman instead of on Greek lines, the evil effects of which are still visible to-day. But surely it is "midsummer madness" to stake so much on the development, in itself conjectural, of an individual mind. It was Petrarch's extraordinary fame, combined with his personal charm, which set the leaven of the Renaissance working. At the age of thirty-eight the bent of his disposition was not likely to have been changed. However expert he might have become in Greek literature, however fascinated by its depth of thought and the supreme finish of its immortal style, his youthful enthusiasm for Rome and Rome's glory would have suffered no abatement; he would have been loth to admit the superiority of Greece.<sup>1</sup> It was certainly a minor disadvantage—inevitable and independent of Petrarch—that the revival of Latin letters should have been anterior in date; but with those who were really learned the fifteenth century redressed the balance and restored Greek to its rightful position. For the multitude, whose "Romance" languages were founded upon Latin, it was neither to be expected nor desired that Greek should take the first place.

In the following winter another visitor arrived at Avignon, who not only influenced our poet's intellect, but stirred his soul to its inmost depths. Towards the end of 1342 there were disturbances in Rome which, for the moment at least, overthrew the power of the Senators. A provisional government of the Heads of the thirteen Merchant Guilds (called the "Thirteen Good Men") was re-established under the Papal authority on the lines that had intermittently prevailed from 1335 to 1337. The people's representatives<sup>2</sup> determined to send an envoy to Avignon, who was to justify their action and urge the same requests as the former deputation. They chose a young notary of low origin named Nicola Gabrini di Rienzo (son of Lorenzo),

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hollway-Calthrop (pp. 108, 109) justly emphasizes this important point. See *F.* VI. 4, translated in Vol. I. pp. 453-455.

<sup>2</sup> Christophe (ii. 472, 473) denies that there was any revolt or intermission of the Senatorial authority in Rome; but Gregorovius (VI. Pt. i. 226-230) proves that there were no Senators from January to July, 1343, and that the Thirteen discharged their functions.

now often called "Rienzi,"<sup>1</sup> who had gained much fame by his gift of fervid oratory.

"Cola"—as Italians generally style him—was now about thirty years of age—the legitimate son<sup>2</sup> of an innkeeper (who died early) and of his wife Maddalena, who earned a modest living by laundry work and by carrying water.<sup>3</sup> The youth had the advantage of a handsome face and fine presence. He had been brought up among peasants at Anagni; yet he somehow managed to get a good education, which fitted him for the more humble side of the legal profession. But he was mainly self-taught, and like the Laureate, of whose crowning he may have been a spectator, he had steeped his mind in Livy, Cicero, and the poets of ancient Rome. He used to apostrophize wondering audiences with the question, "Where are those good Romans of old and their lofty justice? Would that we could have lived in their days!"<sup>4</sup> He had lost a brother in the bloody feuds of the barons and was determined to put an end to their rule. His imagination was fired by the monuments of Rome and their numberless inscriptions, which he would eagerly translate "with a whimsical smile"<sup>5</sup> for the benefit of passers-by. He had fed his mind with the image of ancient Rome, till it became, as it had become with Petrarch, his ideal; and, he dreamed of a restoration of her world-wide power and equal laws, in which he, the lowly plebeian, would take a foremost part. Like "Vivian Grey," he was himself the centre of his most impassioned dreams. He had the spark of genius which enabled him to seize the opportunity when it came, but not that patient political wisdom, which sobered "Vivian Grey's" creator and led him to distinguish between the practicable and the impossible. We know nothing of the origins of Cola's mission to the Pope, but we may

<sup>1</sup> This form seems chiefly prevalent in France and England, and is hard to displace, but Italians have shown that it is incorrect. I have generally followed their custom of calling him by the shortened name "Cola."

<sup>2</sup> During his short Tribunate he himself spread the absurd tale that he was the bastard son of the Emperor, Henry VII.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 17 of the anonymous *Vita di Cola di Rienzo* (14th century), republished by Zefirino Re. (Florence, 1854). I cite the pages of this principal edition.

<sup>4</sup> *Vita*, p. 18.

<sup>5</sup> "In sua bocca sempre riso in qualche modo fantastico." *Ibid.*



be sure that his selection was due to his learning and his oratorical gift.

He arrived about the middle of January, 1343; and when he pleaded his cause in the consistory, he favourably impressed the Pope (himself no mean orator), but was less successful with some of the Italian Cardinals. In reiterating the requests of the first deputation, he depicted with unusual freedom the misdeeds of the barons and the consequent sufferings of the Roman people. Clement gave the same answer as before, and the Bull on the half-century Jubilee was at once published (January 27); while Cola, in a bombastic letter modelled on the style of the Curia, exhorted the Romans to erect a statue on the Capitol to the new Pope and to prove themselves worthy of his favour by laying aside their intestine broils. He signs himself "Consul of the Romans and sole popular envoy to the Pope from the widows, the orphans, and the poor." It is said that Clement frequently sent for this singular man and listened with apparent sympathy to his vehement private denunciation of the Roman nobles. Thereupon Cardinal Colonna took alarm for the interests of his family and persuaded the Pope to give the cold shoulder to the eloquent envoy. For some time Cola lived in the greatest poverty at Avignon, and when sickness supervened, he had to resort to the charity of the hospital.<sup>1</sup> From this extremity he was rescued, it would seem, by the strenuous advocacy of Petrarch.

Doubtless soon after his arrival Cola would seek out the citizen and Laureate of Rome; and Petrarch himself testifies, when Cola was brought a prisoner to Avignon ten years later, that at this time they had been united by ties of friendship and even of affection.<sup>2</sup> There was a psychic affinity between the two men, which would draw them together at once. Each was an idealist; each rested his hope on the revival of a glorious past without much practical knowledge of present conditions; each was apt to be blinded by his gift of exuberant rhetoric to the hard facts of the existing situation. Possibly Cola had

<sup>1</sup> So I understand the rather obscure sentence in the *Vita*, p. 19. De Sade (ii. 50) declines to believe that a Roman envoy could be reduced to such straits.

<sup>2</sup> *F.* XIII. 6 (to Nelli) of August 10, 1352 (*Frac.* III. 237), "diu ante (*i.e.* before 1347) mihi cognitum dilectumque" and "veteris in eis ipsis locis contractæ olim amicitiae."

exhausted his pecuniary resources and did not possess the means to return to Rome. At any rate, Petrarch must have ventured, without trenching upon politics, to intercede for his friend with his patron, and his intervention was successful.<sup>1</sup> Cola regained his favour with the Pope; and when the new Senators, whose term began on July 1, instituted a process against him, Clement called upon them to abandon it. He speaks of Cola as his "beloved son" and his "familiar,"<sup>2</sup> and insists that his only aim was the deliverance of the city from oppression. This letter is dated August 3, 1343; and eight months later, before Cola left Avignon, he was appointed notary of the civic camera in Rome, with a salary of five gold florins a month.

Of this close intimacy between Petrarch and the future Tribune, which must have ripened during this summer, we have but one faint echo in the former's correspondence. It is in the seventh of the collection which he styled "Unaddressed Letters"<sup>3</sup>; but its contents leave no doubt that it was written to his new friend, before he had reached his pinnacle of brief glory, and when they could often meet to discuss the miseries of Rome. One day they had been pacing the streets of Avignon and had paused before the vestibule of St. Agricola,<sup>4</sup> to which perhaps they had previously withdrawn for silent prayer.<sup>5</sup> Cola had descanted with such eloquence upon his favourite theme that "at last the fire burned" in his companion's soul and found vent in the following impassioned missive:

"When I recall the inspired and weighty words which you addressed to me the day before yesterday at the entrance of that ancient fane, my heart is all aglow, and I fancy it was no man speaking, but God who uttered an oracle from that ancient shrine. So divinely did you seem to expound the present state

<sup>1</sup> This is a fair inference from the statement of the *Vita* (p. 19), though P. is not expressly mentioned. The author simply says that Cardinal Colonna, who "abased him" afterwards "exalted him." Probably no friend of Cola but P. had influence enough with the Cardinal to effect such a change.

<sup>2</sup> See the later letter of August 9, 1343, in Gregorovius (*loc. cit.* p. 229, n.).

<sup>3</sup> *Epistolæ "Sine Titulo" or "Sine Nomine"* (see Chap. XXV., below). In Frac. it is Appendix II. (III. 504-506).

<sup>4</sup> P. does not specify this church, which stood at the back of the Cardinal's palace; but Fuzet (p. 165) and V. Develay (*Lettres sans Titre*, i. 105) have conjectured it as the scene.

<sup>5</sup> M. E. Cosenza, *F. P. and the Revolution of Cola di Rienzo* (Chicago, 1913), p. 8.

of the Republic—nay, its fall and ruin—so deeply did you probe our wounds with your splendid words that whenever the sound of your voice rises in my memory, sorrow seizes upon eyes and heart; and my soul, which they kindled as you spoke, melts, when I reflect upon them, into tears, not womanly, but manly and strong—tears which, if the chance came, would venture nobly and promote the cause of justice, as befits a man. Though we often met before, yet specially since that day I have been constantly with you in spirit. I waver between despair and hope, and whisper to myself, ‘Oh, if ever—if it could only happen in my day . . . if I could be a sharer in so grand and glorious a work!’ Then I turn to the Crucified, Who is my treasure, and exclaim sadly, with moistened eyes, ‘O Jesus, too merciful in Thy goodness—“*Lord, why sleepest Thou? Rise and do not cast us off for ever! Wherefore hidest Thou Thy face? Dost Thou forget our poverty and trouble?*”’<sup>1</sup> Behold, O God, our protector, look upon our sufferings and their source and the things that are done by Thine enemies under the shield of Thy Name. Behold and punish. . . .”

Then after a paragraph of expostulation with the Saviour, which in its fierce vehemence is hardly compatible with reverent prayer, he recollects himself:

“But what am I saying, mannikin that I am? Who am I that I should enter the lists with Thee? To Thee we commit ourselves and all that we have; Thou, Who hast created us, wilt behold and remember that we can exist no longer beneath such a load of calamity. Therefore grant us aid, while life remains, lest if we perish, Thou have to raise from death those whom Thou mightest have saved. Come, O our Hope, hasten to answer our daily prayer for succour; we entreat Thee bring to an end the world’s woes, or else destroy Thou the world itself!”

With this extraordinary petition he closes what Fracassetti fancies to<sup>2</sup> have been a letter written from Vacluse; I should rather suppose it to have been a kind of religious rhapsody, written in the privacy of his chambers, to be shown to his friend next day. The intercourse between them must have taken place entirely at Avignon; for in writing four years later<sup>3</sup> to

<sup>1</sup> The quotation is verbatim from the Vulgate of Psalm 43 (44 A.V.), 23, 24.

<sup>2</sup> *Adnot. in Epist. F. P.*, p. 116.

<sup>3</sup> *Var.* 42, written about July, 1347. See below, pp. 406–408.



the Tribune, then at the height of his power, he gives him a picture of his country retreat as a place which he has evidently not seen. Cola, restored this summer to the Pontiff's favour, remained at Avignon at least seven months <sup>1</sup> after Petrarch had left it for Italy.

Except for a hasty visit on receiving the sad news of King Robert's death,<sup>2</sup> the poet seems scarcely to have been at Vacluse at all in the years 1342 and 1343. His lessons in Greek must have taken place in the city; and the *Secret*, which was composed in the twelve months following Barlaam's departure, was certainly written at Avignon.<sup>3</sup> We find in that work the first strong indication of his desire for independence<sup>4</sup>; and it is possible that Cola's diatribes against the Roman nobles sowed the first seeds of that coolness between Petrarch and his patron which came to a head during the revolution of 1347.

The year 1343 was, indeed, a critical year in his life; and it is much to be regretted that we have so few letters belonging to its first nine months. In that period, I am convinced, occurred not only the reawakening of his patriotic emotions in the manner just described, but also the final separation from his brother by Gherardo's entry into the Carthusian Order. M. Cochin is therefore mistaken in fixing the year 1342 <sup>5</sup> for the latter event; but when he wrote his charming work on Petrarch's brother he had

<sup>1</sup> His appointment as Notary in the camera is dated April 13, 1344.

<sup>2</sup> *F. V. 1* (to Barbato) from Vacluse, February, 1343. See below, pp. 286, 287.

<sup>3</sup> This is abundantly clear from *Dial. II. and III.* (B. ed. pp. 387, 394, 406).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 388, 394.

<sup>5</sup> *Le Frère de P.* (1903), pp. 56, 197-200. His argument rests on four letters—*F. X. 3* (to Gherardo), *F. XVI. 9*, *F. XVII. 1*, *Sen. XV. 5*. The notes of time in two of the last three would suit 1343 equally well, and that in *F. XVII. 1* considerably better. With regard to the letter to Gherardo (*F. X. 3*), written at Carpi, I can prove that Fracassetti is wrong in dating P.'s visit to that place in September, 1348. De Sade's date of 1349 (*III. 34, 35*) is unquestionably correct; and the epitaph quoted by Tiraboschi fixing Manfredo Pio's death on September 12, 1348, must either be an error, or (preferably) P. did not visit him that summer as he intended (see *F. IX. 1*), but paid the visit to his son the next year. The date of *F. X. 3* (September 25) would be thirteen days after Manfredo's death, if the letter belonged to 1348. P. expressly states in *F. VIII. 7* of June 22, 1349 (to Socrates), that before his visit to Padua in March of that year, he had not moved from Parma for nearly a year (see *Chap. XXII.*, below); and the following visits to Ferrara and Padua also clearly belong to 1349. P. says in *F. X. 3* (September 25, 1349) that it was the seventh year since Gherardo became a monk. This would be true, if he was "professed" in the summer of 1343.

not the whole evidence before him. We know now<sup>1</sup> that on March 13, 1343, the Pope appointed Gherardo, at his own solicitation, a writer in the office of the "penitentiary" of the Curia; and though his application at such a time is surprising, it is in keeping with the wavering inconstancy<sup>2</sup> of his character as described by his brother. The year 1343 was a critical one also for him; but in his case the crisis was exclusively spiritual, though we cannot assign with certainty its predisposing cause. He had long felt drawn to the cloistral life; and therefore we can hardly place so late the death of his lady-love, which happened far more probably at least six years before and almost upset his mental balance. We cannot say whether the decision came simply through a pilgrimage with his brother to the "Holy Cave"<sup>3</sup> in the Lent of this year<sup>4</sup> (possibly a little later), or whether that pilgrimage was itself caused by a serious illness, which brought him almost to the gates of death.<sup>5</sup> The one certainty seems to be that in this spring or summer he took the irrevocable step and entered the secluded Provençal monastery of Montrieux, about twenty miles north-east of Toulon.

The two brothers, who were much attached to each other, as Petrarch's subsequent letters prove, had never been far apart since the death of their parents, except during Francesco's summer at Lombez and his travels in 1337 and 1341. The latter, perhaps, was the more self-sufficient of the two; although not remarkable for strength of will, he had mental resources, to which Gherardo was a stranger. He was also the elder; and Gherardo may have leant upon him all the more from a consciousness of his intellectual superiority. The long hesitation of the younger brother may have been due partly to fraternal affection and partly to a dread

<sup>1</sup> Carlo Cipolla (*op. cit.* sup. n. 5, p. 194, published in 1909).

<sup>2</sup> P. speaks of his "cor lubricum" in *F. X.* 3.

<sup>3</sup> See above, Chap. XIII. p. 100.

<sup>4</sup> Easter Day was on April 13, and Ash Wednesday on February 26. Therefore if the pilgrimage took place in Lent, the brothers may have been engaged in it when the Papal appointment was made.

<sup>5</sup> De Sade (II. 69) says that he found in the Papal Registers an absolution "in articulo mortis" accorded to Gherardo on August 2, 1343. If his statement be correct that these were often applied for not in actual illness, but as a mere precaution, this may mark the proximate date of G.'s entry "into religion." In any case a novice shut off from the world would scarcely apply for an indulgence costing money. Strangely enough M. Cochin ignores this fact altogether.

of the austere Carthusian Rule; for Francesco never gives the slightest hint that he had attempted to dissuade him. Indeed, in a letter of fourteen years later<sup>1</sup> to the General of the Carthusians, he plainly implies the contrary; and in his letters to his brother he applauds his choice and speaks of his own spiritual position as on an infinitely lower plane.

We may certainly conclude that he was in Provence when Gherardo departed for his monastery<sup>2</sup>; and perhaps the latter, in his sorrow at the separation, then urged him to take the same course and join the same community.<sup>3</sup> It is hardly credible that he ever seriously thought of such a step. He was far too fond of his personal liberty, and he must have been aware that he had no monastic vocation. The Carthusian Rule, in particular, required an utter suppression of individuality—the very thing which for Petrarch would have been impossible. The two brothers—in many ways so alike—were in this respect far as the poles apart. Gherardo—a true representative of the Middle Ages—became a monk in the noblest sense; he rejoiced in passivity and routine, yet could show rare fortitude in the presence of imminent danger.<sup>4</sup> Francesco—the protagonist of the new spirit of freedom and inquiry—was not cast in a heroic mould; he would have pined in a cloister like a wild animal in a cage: he simply lacked the power of surrendering the gifts with which Nature had richly endowed him. Yet he never lost his warm affection for his immured brother; and among the many plans which he adopted and discarded was one to fix his residence with a chosen friend in the neighbourhood of Montrieux.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Sen.* XVI. 9 (Frac.), of April 25, 1357. The General was Jean Birel. See Chap. XXIX., below.

<sup>2</sup> It is a natural inference from the letter last cited. But I cannot agree with M. Cochin (*op. cit.* pp. 57, 58) that the "counsels" given by G. to P. "*supremo digressu*" (see *F.* X. 5, of 1352) refer to G.'s departure for Montrieux in 1343. They surely must refer (as in a note he admits may be possible) to P.'s departure from the monastery in February, 1347, which he may have supposed was a final farewell, though he did see him again in 1353. The counsels would come with more force from a "religious" with experience of their efficacy than from a humble novice not yet professed. See Chap. XIX., p. 399.

<sup>3</sup> In *Ecl.* I., G., as Monicus, makes the proposal to P., as Silvius, and this must have had some basis of fact. De Sade, however (II. 69), supposes that it was made after G.'s profession, forgetting that G. wrote him no letters for six years.

<sup>4</sup> See Chap. XXI., below, for the story of his conduct during the plague.

<sup>5</sup> See below, Chap. XIX. p. 400.



At first the separation was so complete that he must have felt it severely. The Rule did not allow his brother either to write or to receive letters<sup>1</sup> during his "probation" (which lasted a year) or indeed afterwards without the consent of his superiors; and therefore Francesco did not write to him for more than six years, though he visited him in the course of the fourth year. Gherardo is mentioned in the Carthusian Annals as a "Clericus Redditus"<sup>2</sup>—i.e. not a "Father," or full monk of the choir (these were generally priests), but a "religious" of the second grade, who were generally in minor orders, but could not proceed beyond the diaconate. They had, however, their due place in the refectory and chapter; and it seems from Petrarch's letters<sup>3</sup> that at Montrieux—unlike other convents of the Order—the "Brothers" did regular manual labour in the duties of the establishment, yet were not absolved from the rule of study and the copying of MSS. The regulation of silence was strictly observed from Matins (6 a.m.) to Nones (3 p.m.); and the conversation after the latter hour must be confined to prescribed subjects.<sup>4</sup> Gherardo took pleasure in this rule; and managed, according to his brother,<sup>5</sup> to maintain his cheerful serenity unchanged.

Petrarch often speaks in his letters to Gherardo as if he envied him his quiet and devout life; and we have already remarked<sup>6</sup> an ascetic strain in his character, which leaves no doubt that the avowal was sincere. But his imagination was wont to dwell rather on the rural peace which he would have enjoyed than on the strict rule, which he would have frankly detested. There is,

<sup>1</sup> See the Rule (as quoted from Dugdale's *Monasticon Anglicanum*, I. 951 *seqq.*) in Fosbroke's *British Monachism*, p. 71.

<sup>2</sup> The lowest class of lay-brothers who took no vows were the "donati" (the "given"); the lowest who took vows were the "redditi" (the "re-given"), Cochin (*op. cit.* pp. 93–97). Probably (as stated in Chap. V.) Gherardo was already, like his brother, a tonsured clerk, or he would not have been qualified for the penitentiary appointment.

<sup>3</sup> For the labour, see "magnus labor" in *F. X.* 3 (Frac. II. 78). (It is possible, however, that P. was ignorant of the Carthusian Rule). For the study, it was part of the Rule for lettered clerks to transcribe MSS. (Cochin, p. 102), and we know from *F. XVIII.* 5, that G. shared P.'s taste for fine copies.

<sup>4</sup> The conversation from November to Easter must be on the customs of the Order; the rest of the year on the Gospels (Fosbroke, *loc. cit.*).

<sup>5</sup> *Sen.* XV. 5 (to Gherardo). For G.'s love of silence see *F. X.* 3 (Frac. II. 69).

<sup>6</sup> See above, Vol. I. p. 325, on the Ventoux letter.

however, abundant evidence that the actual or impending retirement of his brother from the world synchronized with a more serious state of mind, which some writers have described as his definite "conversion." We have not only his statement in the *Letter to Posterity*<sup>1</sup> that on "approaching his fortieth year" (which he entered on July 20, 1343) he began to lead a more moral life and to throw off the bad habits of his youth; but the anniversary sonnet of 1343<sup>2</sup>—written, probably, as was his wont, in Holy Week (April 6-12)—strikes a graver note than its predecessors, though still in the paradoxical form so characteristic of his manner. It is thus translated by Macgregor:

"My sixteenth year of sighs its course has run;  
 I stand alone, already on the brow  
 Where Age descends; and yet it seems as now  
 My time of trial only were begun.  
 'Tis sweet to love and good to be undone;  
 Though life be hard, more days may Heaven allow  
 Misfortune to outlive; else Death may bow  
 The bright head low my loving praise that won.  
 Here am I now who fain would be elsewhere;  
 More would I wish, and yet no more I would;  
 I could no more, and yet did all I could;  
 And new tears born of old desires declare  
 That still I am as I was wont to be  
 And that a thousand changes change not me."

There are other poems<sup>3</sup> of less certain date, but probably of this period, which witness to the same state of mind; and we must remember that 1343 was almost certainly the date of the birth of his natural daughter Francesca.<sup>4</sup> But the chief indication of his new outlook upon life is to be found in the remarkable work, which he called his *Secretum* and on which he was engaged during this spring, though it may have been begun during the winter preceding. It contains no positive reference to his

<sup>1</sup> *Ep. Post.* (Frac. I. 3).

<sup>2</sup> S. 95 ("Rimansi addietro").

<sup>3</sup> Especially Sest. V. ("Alla dolce ombra"). Others may be Sest. IV. ("Chi e fermato") and S. 60 ("Io son sì stanco").

<sup>4</sup> See Chap. XIII., above. Baldelli supposes (p. 205) from a passage in *F. X.* 3 (Frac. II. 72) that Francesca's mother died at her birth in her own early youth. The inference is hazardous, for at the date of that letter "Laura" was dead, and the passage seems naturally to refer to her (indeed, it may have been his veiled way of telling Gherardo the fact). I believe on the contrary (as stated in Chap. XIII.) that P.'s mistress survived at least till 1351.

brother's entrance on the religious life; and this is perhaps a sign that that event had not taken place when the first two dialogues—the natural place for such reference—were composed. The next chapter must be devoted to an account of this—the most singular, if not the ablest, of all his Latin works.



## LETTER

From *F. IV.* 12.

*To Cardinal Colonna*

### AGAINST IMMODERATE GRIEF FOR HIS BROTHER

. . . . " Every time the memory of your loss comes before your mind's eye, it is but right that I should remind you of the Divine generosity. He is ungrateful who, while he remembers the loss of a gift, forgets that it has been received. Therefore when your mind is stung by the bitter thought, ' Ah, what a brother I have lost ! ' let it be softened by that sweeter one, ' What a brother I have had '—aye and have still, and shall have for ever, though he made but a short stay here, while it was needful for him and me, for his country and the world. But as soon as it began to be better for him to leave these earthly troubles, God took him away, from regard for his good rather than ours, nay perhaps for ours too,. For who is fit to examine the hidden and inscrutable reasons or issues of Divine Providence ? ' It is an Apostle, if I mistake not, who says, ' Who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been His counsellor ? ' <sup>1</sup> . . .

" The boldness of man ' kicks against the pricks ' <sup>2</sup> and vainly pushes the horns of its pride against the force of fate, unless it fall, conquered by heavier blows. Why should I go on to speak of the empty wishes or joys or laments of men ? Truth lies deeply hidden ; we are wrapt in a cloud of mist and trust ourselves to chance, as blind men leaning on blind leaders ; and the veil of the flesh prevents our knowing what we ought to wish or fear. We bewail what is good for us and exult in our miseries ; we weep or laugh without discrimination. Let each follow his own judgment ; but to me our supreme error seems to consist in our not absolutely trusting ourselves and our concerns to God—in relying on our own plans, though so often deceived in them—in loving this frail body so much that we can scarce bear with calmness the idea of leaving it, or seeing our friends leave it. Life is short and time most fleeting ; the sea of human affairs is stormy and troubled with adverse winds ; havens are rare

<sup>1</sup> Romans xi. 34. It is a quotation from Isaiah xl. 13 (verbatim from the Vulgate, except for "novit" instead of "cognovit"), with perhaps a reminiscence of Wisdom ix. 13.

<sup>2</sup> The very words of the Vulgate in Acts ix. 5.

and hard to reach ; rocks innumerable surround us, amid which navigation is difficult and dangerous—scarce one in a thousand emerges safe and sound. Thus fortune exercises an equal sway over all classes, and the skiff of mortal frailty is dashed against anything it meets. Can we in such a state desire for our loved ones too long a life, or rather too long a peril ?

“ . . . I am convinced that your brother of sacred memory has lived neither more nor less time than was well for him, and that he has been called in good season, though his departure has come long before many—my poor self included—desired or suspected it would happen. I would not suppose that you could share, or derive comfort from, those unmanly emotions of the vulgar shown in such questions as, ‘ Why has death come upon him so far away ? Why is he not buried in the tomb of his fathers ? Why could we not have been with him at the last ? ’ Such, according to the poet, was the lament of the hero—brave, but ever too prone to weep <sup>1</sup>—who said,

‘ Yourself, poor friend, I sought in vain  
To give you, ’ere I crossed the main  
A tomb on Ilium’s shore.’

I will not insist on commonplaces, nor try to prove geometrically, how small the whole earth is, how the road to heaven is the same from whatsoever place we set out, how not only is every land the brave man’s country, but the native land of all. . . . <sup>2</sup>

“ . . . Refuse then to esteem your brother dead, for he lives—while we are dying daily without noticing it and even—alas for our blindness!—are dreading death, which is the beginning of the true life. And in order that he may live, not so much in your grief as in your thoughts and daily talk, you will, I trust, forbid in your halls that faint-hearted silence which men generally observe in homes of sorrow—that shrinking from naming the dead as from a source of melancholy. Nay, rather let that glorious name resound there, and as it will soon spread its branches far and wide, let it have its roots among you, especially since the grave has no fear of the cloud of envy, which so freely attaches itself to men of mark. And if many, who were hated or despised at home and abroad have become bright and beloved in death, what could one expect for him who was sweetest and most brilliant in life, unless—if the superlative can be exceeded—that he should become more brilliant in death ? Aye, and banish, I entreat you, far from your doors that vulgar abuse which I have noted, and sometimes censured in many,

<sup>1</sup> Æneas of Deiphobus (*Æn.* VI. 507, 508. Conington’s translation).

<sup>2</sup> Here follows the passage about the removal of the Bishop’s remains to Rome, see above, p. 188.

especially among my Romans. They will not mention any of the dead without some prefix of pity, as ' Poor fellow ! Unlucky fellow ! ' and so forth ; they even suppress the name as they utter it, leaving it incomplete. Nay, but your brother was happy in his life here, happier still in his departure hence, happiest of all in his present life elsewhere ; and so he should be mentioned fully and freely. In Lucan it is the remark of the dying Pompey :

' In death none needs compassion.' <sup>1</sup>

A noble saying ! Otherwise all men now born, or to be born in after ages, are objects of pity. Finally, I would remind you again and again that men of great distinction, whose names I need not recall to you, were praised above all for bearing the deaths of their loved ones bravely. And you must pay the closer attention to this because, if you consider carefully, your actions are an example to others, you are yourself set on an eminence, and on you the eyes of all are fixed. This is the fruit of your hard-won renown, of the greatness of your noble family and of the simplicity of your past life. Farewell.

" *January 5th.*"

<sup>1</sup> P. quotes the words as " *Nemo fit morte miser* " ; but in Lucan they are " *non sum morte miser* " (*Phars.* VIII. 632).



## EXCURSUS V

### ON THE SITE OF PETRARCH'S HOUSE AND GARDENS AT VAUCLUSE

A GREAT deal that has been written about the house and gardens of the poet proceeds as much from pure fantasy as the theories about the identity and residence of "Laura." The pseudo-antiquary, Gabriel Simeoni (1557),<sup>1</sup> identifies the house with the castle of the Bishop of Cavaillon on the western side of the valley; but he was a foreigner, and we need not assume that he was repeating the Vaucluse tradition of his day. A century later Abraham Golnitz says that the ruins of the dwellings of "the two lovers" were still shown, and that a "subterranean passage"<sup>2</sup> existed between the house of the poet and that of his mistress. It was perhaps upon this early fable that two later writers<sup>3</sup> have founded their theories that the poet's house was on the slope of the hill facing the east, between the castle and the village. These theories have the supreme defect of being at variance alike with the plain statements of the poet himself and with the tradition of the place—constant at least from the beginning of the seventeenth century and attested by documents of that date.

In a letter to his friend Nelli—written probably in the summer of 1352—Petrarch, after speaking of his upper garden near the fount of the Sorgues,<sup>4</sup> writes:

"The second (garden) quite close to the house is both better tended and beloved of Bacchus.<sup>5</sup> This, strange to say, is in

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Tomasini (*Petrarcha redivivus*, 1650, pp. 79, 94).

<sup>2</sup> In his *Ulysses Gallo-Belgicus* (Lyons, 1655). He was—as children say—"getting rather warm," for his "passage" may perhaps be the ancient tunnel.

<sup>3</sup> H. d'Olivier Vitalis (*L'Illustre Châtelaine des environs de Vaucluse*, Paris, 1842) and the Marquis de Monclar (*La Maison de P. a Vaucluse*, Paris, 1895). The first identified it with the "Maison Parpaye" (so called in early Vaucluse documents), the second with a very ancient building (too small even for a rustic poet), which is now thought to be the ruins of an old oratory dedicated to St. Stephen.

<sup>4</sup> *F.* XIII. 8 (Frac. II. 251. It cannot be earlier than 1351). "Hic nascenti Sorgiæ impendet."

<sup>5</sup> That is, planted with vines.

the middle of the very rapid and beautiful stream, and near it—separated only by a short bridge—is at the back of the house an arched recess in the natural rock, which prevents my feeling the heat of the blazing sun. It is a place that invites to study; and I fancy it is not unlike the little chamber where Cicero was wont to declaim, except that the latter had not the Sorgues gliding past it."

From this passage it is patent that the house rested against a cliff on the very margin of the stream, and that it was parted by a short bridge (doubtless of wood) from an "island," which was the site of Petrarch's principal garden. There is one spot, and one only, which exactly answers to this description. It is at the eastern end of the tunnel mentioned in Chapter XIII., which opens upon the canalized branch of the Sorgues (not the main stream) and across this is an "island," planted here and there with laurels—supposed to be the descendants of those introduced by the poet himself. A small clump of plane trees on the right bank of the canal just below the tunnelled rock, occupies the northern point of the island, where the canal reunites with the main stream.

Despite this conclusive evidence there has been a modern attempt to prove that his house was on the right bank of the Sorgues near the church of St. Véran. But this view is in flat contradiction to another letter,<sup>1</sup> where, in an imaginary voyage from Tivoli drawn up for his friend San Vito,<sup>2</sup> he tells him that on arriving at Vacluse by boat up the Sorgues he will find him "on his right"—that is, on the left (not on the right) bank of the stream.<sup>3</sup> I have already said that this is not a case in which local tradition appears to be at variance with the plain statements of the distinguished resident himself; the two are entirely in accord, as I shall now proceed to show. Petrarch's choice of a humble rural dwelling made a strong impression upon his own generation, and therefore, notwithstanding the subsequent misfortunes of the village, tradition is not likely to

<sup>1</sup> *F. VI. 3.* See the portion of the letter translated above, pp. 101-103.

<sup>2</sup> M. Bayle (p. 5, *op. cit. inf. n. 1*, p. 221) wrongly supposes it to be addressed to the Cardinal.

<sup>3</sup> In face of this Mr. E. J. Mills (*Secret of P.*, 1904, pp. 91, 190) strangely asserts that P. "expressly says" he lived on the right bank of the stream. Prof. Nino Quarta ("La casa e i giardini del P. a Valchiusa," in *Atti della Reale Accad. di Archeologia, Lettere e Belle Arti*, Naples, 1908, Vol. XXVI.) attempts to escape from this dilemma by maintaining that P. does not say he will see his house, but himself! or, alternatively, that San Vito's view of P. on his right was after—not before—his disembarkation!

be mistaken upon a point of this kind. Boccaccio says<sup>1</sup> that after the poet's departure

"the inhabitants visited his dwelling as a sort of sanctuary, sacred to some divinity, and showed it to the ignorant and to strangers as a kind of miracle; nor can one doubt that their sons, grandsons and descendants will venerate the traces of him still more from admiration for so great a poet."

Not many months after he quitted the village for the last time, this rustic shrine suffered a terrible violation. On Christmas Day, 1353, a small band of armed brigands made an attack on the village and set fire to many of the houses—among them the cottage of Petrarch. The son of his old bailiff had had the foresight to convey the chests containing his books to the castle on the hill before the outrage was committed; and this stronghold of the Bishop was not attacked by the band—probably because they expected it to be stoutly defended by his armed retainers.<sup>2</sup> "The robbers," says the poet, "carried off all that was portable and set fire to the rest," so that the building—perhaps mainly constructed of wood—was burnt down, and only "the old vault" (or recess) "resisted the flames."<sup>3</sup> In his Will, dated in 1370, Petrarch mentioned his property at Vacluse as a "*modium terræ*"<sup>4</sup> (roughly, about an English rood) without specifying any house; and he bequeaths this small property to the village hospital for the relief of the poor, or if this should prove impracticable, to Jean and Pierre Monet, sons of his old bailiff Raymond, or if they be dead, to their children.

There is no evidence to show in what way this bequest took effect. But whoever may have been the beneficiary under the Will, he had little time to enjoy his small inheritance. During the first disorders caused by the Great Schism, about the year 1384, the troops of Raymond de Turenne, nephew of Pope Gregory XI. and great-nephew of Petrarch's patron, Clement VI., so utterly devastated Vacluse that the surviving inhabitants were compelled to migrate to Lagnes or L'Isle-sur-Sorgues. The castle of the Bishop was left in ruins, and for about thirty years the "Closed Valley" remained desolate and uninhabited.

<sup>1</sup> *De Montium, Fontium (etc.) nominibus* (Geographical Dictionary) in the Basle edition of the Latin works by J. Hervagius (1532), p. 435.

<sup>2</sup> *Sen. X. 2* (to Gui Sette); "*Prædones inexpugnabilem, ut est, rati, sed, ut erat, indefensam ac vacuum ignorantes*" (B. ed. p. 962).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* "*Testudo vetus incendio resistit.*"

<sup>4</sup> The B. ed. (p. 1375) reads "*modicum*," but the MS. at Florence reads "*modium*," which is doubtless right. The "*modius*" was reckoned as a third part of the "*jugerum*," which corresponds to the French "*arpent*."



In 1413 Giovanaci, Bishop of Cavaillon, held an enquiry into the condition of the village, and, having established the fact of its complete ruin, induced his Chapter to lease the whole place to a feudal tenant, on condition that he should restore it and persuade the old inhabitants to return.<sup>1</sup> The proprietor who now effected this restoration was Guillaume Saignet, seneschal of Provence, in whose family it remained for nearly two hundred years. To this family was due the first transformation of the rustic valley into a scene of manufacturing activity by the utilizing for industrial purposes of the water-power of the Sorgues. As early as 1471 the documents record a "mustard-mill"; and in the next century is mentioned a paper-mill in the eastern quarter of the village, with which we are specially concerned.

That quarter lies beyond the eastern exit of the "Roman tunnel" described above (pp. 63, 64), and faces the narrow "canal" of the Sorgues (also attributed by some to the Romans), which makes an "island" of Petrarch's lower garden. This canal was ideal for the employment of the water-power in factories, because, although the water flows through it at a swift pace, it was less liable to disturbance from the greater discharge in time of "spate," which is chiefly carried down the main stream. At the eastern end of the tunnel are two large vaulted spaces under the rock to the right and left, as if the passage had been driven westwards through the back of a quarry. Against the left-hand vault (as you emerge from the tunnel) and nearest to the canal is placed a house of no great antiquity, occupied in 1898 by Madame Tacussel's work-people, which seems to be on the exact site of the poet's cottage.

We will now see how the records of the lordship support this conclusion. On March 13, 1475, Charles Saignet and his son leased this part of the village to Michele Tessoni of Turin, that he might construct a forge (or "martinet" as it is called) for the smelting of the iron ore obtainable in the neighbourhood. Among the localities specified in the deed (besides the ironstone quarries of the district) are "a canal derived from the Sorgues" for driving the machinery and two "vaults" or recesses (*crotæ*) for building a house in the place called "over the tunnel" (*super pertusium*). The forge was probably placed at the canal side, above the large house once occupied by Mdme. Tacussel; the double vault against the tunnel must be the spot leased for the erection of a house for the forge-master at the place where the workmen's house now stands. It therefore seems clear that no vestige of the poet's cottage (except the natural recess or arched "verandah" in the rock) existed within a century of his death.

But more than a hundred years later we obtain clear proof

<sup>1</sup> For the succeeding details I am indebted to G. Bayle (*Le Véritable Emplacement de l'habitation de P. a Vaucluse*, (Nîmes, 1897).

from the records that this quarter of the village was associated with his name. By that time the forge had apparently been removed, having probably been answerable for the disappearance of the fine woods of the valley, which would be needed for its fuel. On March 4, 1608, the lordship of Vaucluse was sold by Madeleine, baronne de Brantes (*née* Saignet), the last proprietor of that family, to Claire de Perussis (widow of Henri de Forbin), who seems to have intended to build herself a new château on or near the site of the fortress of the Bishops of Cavaillon. Meanwhile, in 1609, she bought from Claude Bernard of Lagnes a house in the valley called "Pétrarque," with its vaults, dovecote, and yard attached, in the part of Vaucluse called "Pétrarque," facing the road from the "Place" of Vaucluse (in front of the bridge) to the castle and another road leading along the "forge-side" to the same building. Among the other purchases made by this lady at the same time were a garden in the quarter called "At the Forge," and a house in the part of Vaucluse called "Sous Pétrarque," facing the above-named house "Pétrarque," the main road ("Grande Rue") leading to the bridge, and two other houses, one of which belonged to Michau Alibert. The last name is important, for in 1804—nearly two hundred years later—the land and buildings at the eastern end of the tunnel were owned by a proprietor of that name,<sup>1</sup> from whom they passed to the family of Tacussel.

It may fairly be presumed that the house called "Pétrarque," with its vaults against the tunnel, which was bought by the Lady Claire in 1609, was that which had been built by the forge-master, Tesson, at the end of the fifteenth century. The house which now nestles against the rock in the same spot is too modern to be the same building; but the site can be identified by the still existing vaults under the rock, which are mentioned in the deeds. M. Gustave Bayle, from whose excellent brochure I have taken the preceding facts, says that the "island" garden beyond the canal, which two hundred years before had been "a bed of gravel,"<sup>2</sup> was first cultivated in modern times by members of the Tacussel family. In that case it is scarcely conceivable that the laurels now growing there can be, as is suggested, the descendants of those planted by the poet. The stone wall of the garden on the tunnel side, just opposite the vault which must have been Petrarch's "testudo," has evidently been

<sup>1</sup> See J. X. Guérin's *Description de la Fontaine de Vaucluse* (Avignon, 1804), who suggests the same place as M. Bayle for P.'s house and lower garden, as also does J. F. André (once curé of Vaucluse) in his *Vaucluse et ses souvenirs* (1869), under the pseudonym of Louis de Bondelon.

<sup>2</sup> M. Bayle says (p. 40) that this "bed of gravel" is mentioned in a deed of 1609 as belonging to M. Alibert; but he does not explain why the gravel bed is necessarily identical with the lower garden.



pierced by a gate, once giving access to his "short bridge," but now walled up.

It is only on the subject of the gardens of Petrarch that I venture to differ from M. Bayle. What was the scene of the poet's struggle with the nymphs? Was it in the upper or in the lower garden, or in both? After a very careful examination of the verse-letters which describe it, I have come to the conclusion that the upper garden alone suits the language employed. M. Bayle, in quoting *Ep. Metr.* II. iv.—the letter in which Petrarch confesses himself as finally vanquished—imagines that the "narrow corner" ("brevis angulus")<sup>1</sup> to which he says he is reduced by his defeat is the vaulted recess at the back of his house, where he worked in the heat of the summer day. M. Bayle is plainly led to this opinion because the poet goes on to say that "the corner is large enough for him, since guests seldom come," and since the poet's life as well as his poems (*i.e.* those celebrating the contest) are despised by the vulgar. But in this letter, which must belong to 1346 or 1347, Petrarch goes on to say, "This (*i.e.* the corner) we are now fortifying so that no water-power can destroy it, unless the mountain over against it be torn up by the roots."<sup>2</sup> The poet's "lower garden" is not situated (as was the upper) right under the mountain-side,<sup>3</sup> but is separated from the castle-hill by the canal and by a flat space (perhaps P.'s "modius"), occupied now by a road and by other buildings; the main stream, from which flooding alone could be expected, is on the opposite side, beneath the hill-path leading to the "Fount." And M. Bayle surely forgets that the prose-letter describing both gardens,<sup>4</sup> which he has previously cited, belongs to 1352—five years after the defeat which Petrarch had

<sup>1</sup> *Ep. Metr.* III. iv. ll. 46-49:

"Sed enim brevis angulus hærat  
Rupibus,—*ille quidem Nympharum ab origine sedes,*  
Nunc mea Pieridumque domus; satis ampla, quod hospes  
Adveniet rarus, sordent quia carmina vulgo," etc.

<sup>2</sup> Ll. 51, 52;

"Hanc modo vallamus, quam nulla revellit aquæ vis  
Ni montem oppositum a radicibus eruat imis."

The "hanc," though agreeing with "domus," of course refers to the "angulus."

<sup>3</sup> Unless, as M. Bayle seems to imagine (pp. 38, 39), there was another (? a third) garden (of which P. says nothing) on the left bank of the canal between the cottage and the "island" garden. This—if there be room for it—would be under the small declivity pierced by the tunnel; but I cannot understand how such a garden could be exposed to the floods of the Sorgues, for it would be bordered by the canal. By the "mons oppositus" P. surely means the great cliff to your right, as you face the cave of the "Fount."

<sup>4</sup> *F.* XIII. 8, cited above.



accepted as final. At that date, therefore, there was still some of the upper garden remaining, though it was apparently so restricted by the "Nymphs," onset that not many guests could sit there with him at the same time. The upper garden has, of course, long disappeared; it was never more than "a freak" of the poet—only adorned with a few flowers and ferns, for which he had to bring soil from the lower valley.<sup>1</sup> E. Müntz is clearly right in saying that both gardens were on the left bank of the river<sup>2</sup>—which would mean that during the few days of the "spate" the upper would be inaccessible. The presence of vines and fruit-trees and of the "precious laurels" in the lower garden is a tolerably sure sign that—at that time at least—it was not exposed to floods. Moreover, in all the four verse-letters relating to his struggle with the Nymphs, there is some expression<sup>3</sup> clearly indicating that it took place close to the "Fount" itself.

<sup>1</sup> *Ep. Metr.* III. i. 17, 18:

"Jam mihi facta manu nitido brevis area fundo  
Stabat, et advecto ridebat gramine pratum."

M. Bayle asserts (p. 40) that P. also says he had planted vines and fig-trees in this spot. There is nothing of the kind in this context, though much further on (ll. 108, 109) he offers the Cardinal grapes and figs, if he would visit him. These were naturally the produce of his lower garden.

<sup>2</sup> Eugene Müntz, "La Casa di P. a Valchiusa" in Vol. C. of *Nuova Antologia* (1902), p. 648.

<sup>3</sup> These letters are *Ep. Metr.* I. x., III. i. and iv. (to the Cardinal), and III. iii. (to Pastrengo). The last begins with reminiscences of his work with this friend in 1339; and after "Mirandumque caput Sorgæ," P. says that "here" he and his friend made a barrier of rocks against the stream. In I. x. he says that the "supernæ nymphæ" revenged themselves soon after for this affront. In III. i., describing the scene of his 1346 attempt in ll. 4-6, he says:

"Ima tenent fontes . . .  
Sorgia surgit ibi, querulis placidissimus undis"—

In III. iv. there are the lines quoted above in n. 1, p. 223, where the italicized words must mean that P. himself had reclaimed the "corner" from the river. It would be absurd to press "domus" in l. 48 into the sense of a building; it is obviously used, as so often, to mean "an abode, a home."

## EXCURSUS VI

### BRIEF "ARGUMENT" OF THE *AFRICA*

BOOK I. (Introduction). After a conventional address to the Muses (in which he inserts a tribute to Vauclose), the poet invokes the aid of Christ, but in a manner suggesting a doubt of the propriety of the invocation.<sup>1</sup> Then comes the dedication to King Robert (ll. 19-70, added in 1341), in which he hints that he may write another poem on the "miraculous" exploits of the Wise King. After a short review of the causes of the Punic Wars—among which he includes the relative position of the two cities, with their discordant customs and religion—he imagines his hero reaching the shore of the Ocean, when (early in 206 B.C.) he had driven the Carthaginians from the whole of Spain, except the town of Gades. Scipio grieves that he has not done more,<sup>2</sup> and that the shadow of Hannibal still menaces his fatherland of Italy.

Falling asleep with these sad thoughts, he sees in a vision the "shade" of his father Publius,<sup>3</sup> who in 211 had fallen in a Spanish battle with the Carthaginians. Publius first gives him a view of Carthage, and then relates the circumstances of his own death, showing the wounds still visible on his body. Then he points to the "shades" of other commanders who had died earlier in the war and finally to those of former heroes of the Republic, including the first six kings.<sup>4</sup> All this takes place (as in Cicero's *Dream of Scipio*) in "heaven"—in the firmament of the Milky Way. The object is to fire the soul of his son first with the desire of revenge, then with the spirit of emulation, and lastly with love of his country.

BOOK II. With the approach of dawn and the disappearance of the stars, Publius prepares to go; but his son implores him,

<sup>1</sup> He speaks of himself as "mad" (*demens*) and so more fitted to offer tears of repentance than a poem. Here we have the "dualism" in his nature, specially noticed in the next chapter.

<sup>2</sup> "Indoluit vicisse parum" (l. 134).

<sup>3</sup> Carlini (pp. 61-68) calls the father "Cnæus," who was his uncle, slain on the same field as Publius. P. does not himself give their names either in the poem or in *De Vir. Ill.* (Life of Scipio).

<sup>4</sup> The seventh (Superbus) P. evidently considers unworthy of "heaven" from his crimes.

before his departure, to reveal the secrets of the future. What is to be the issue of the conflict? Publius then foretells that his son will defeat Hannibal and subdue Carthage, and that the former will go into exile and stir up new enemies against Rome in other lands.<sup>1</sup> Then the "shade" unfolds the details of later Roman history—the Ætolian and Syrian wars, the conquest of Greece, the victories of Marius, Sylla, and Pompey, the meteoric career of Cæsar, and at last, under Augustus, the establishment of Rome's empire over the world. With the decline of the empire and of the Roman character,<sup>2</sup> the vision becomes less clear; a period of ruin is foretold, brought about by Rome's own barbarian subjects, but no tribe will be able to boast that it has conquered the great city, which will last as long as the world. Here we have Petrarch's theory of the eternity of Rome, which was the inspiration of his life and appears in all his writings. Then the "shade" passes from history to philosophy and expounds, in a vein of pessimism, the littleness of all human things. This is the passage about the "three deaths"—of the body, of memorials, and of fame—which is the germ of the *Trionfi*.<sup>3</sup> Here, however, we have no succession of "Triumphs," but the threefold "Triumph" of Eternity. Before Publius leaves his son, he foretells the ingratitude of Rome for his services, and his death in exile. The whole dream is introduced simply as a device for unfolding the past and future greatness of Rome.

BOOK III. Roused from his sleep by the Roman trumpets, Scipio decides to send his friend Lælius across the straits, in order to induce Syphax, King of Numidia, to become the ally of Rome. The poet's object is to prepare for the transference of the conflict to Africa. He employs much art in describing the palace of Syphax (without specifying its locality); it is resplendent with gold and gems, and has pictures representing the heavenly bodies, the signs of the Zodiac, the gods and goddesses of mythology, and the under-world.<sup>4</sup> Interviewed by Syphax, the envoy unfolds the object of his mission and finds the King favourable, but determined to conclude no definite compact save with Scipio himself, whom he invites to visit him for the purpose. Meanwhile he entertains Lælius at a splendid

<sup>1</sup> P. has imitated the "Somnium Scipionis" (preserved for us by Macrobius from the lost sixth book of the *De Republica*) in the first and last parts of this dream; it is Cicero who places the "heaven" of the ancient heroes in the Milky Way. P was, of course, well aware that the Scipio of the "Somnium" was Africanus the younger, not the elder.

<sup>2</sup> Of post-Christian Romans P. thinks only Vespasian and Titus worthy of praise.

<sup>3</sup> See above, p. 184.

<sup>4</sup> He describes "hell" as "claustris distincta novem"—an evident reminiscence of the "Circles" of Dante's *Inferno*.



banquet, where the royal musician sings to his lyre the legends and history of Africa from the exploits of Hercules to those of Hannibal. It is noteworthy that in dealing with Dido, the poet expressly rejects the Virgilian story of her amour with Æneas.<sup>1</sup> Syphax then courteously requests Lælius to relate the early history of Rome; and in reply the envoy gives a rapid survey of the chief episodes from the death of Lucretia, with its consequence the expulsion of Tarquin, through Curtius, Dentatus, the Fabii and Camillus to the respect of Regulus for his plighted word.

BOOK IV. Syphax now presses his guest for an account of the early exploits of Scipio and he consents. Here we see the object of the relation of Lælius' embassy (which was in fact unimportant) at such length; it is to inform the reader of the antecedent career of the poem's hero. Therefore in this and the previous book Petrarch follows closely the example of the opening books of the Æneid. Lælius first narrates the battle of the Ticinus (218 B.C.) and Scipio's preservation of his father's life; then his prevention of the desertion of Italy by the nobles after Cannæ (216); and finally, his first campaign in Spain, ending with the capture of New Carthage (210).

(It is here, in the very middle of the disposal of the captives in which Scipio's chastity shone so conspicuous, that the great "lacuna"<sup>2</sup> begins. The fourth book, which is a miniature Scipiad, is only half finished, and probably contained the conclusion of Lælius' narrative of the Spanish campaigns (210-206 B.C.). We may, perhaps, surmise that Book V. was to relate Scipio's visit to Syphax, his suppression both of the Spanish rebellion and of the mutiny in his own army and his successful negotiation with Masinissa; that Book VI. was to comprise his consulship (205), his expedition to Locri and his preparations for invading Africa; and that Book VII. was to deal with his first campaign (204, 203), his burning of the Carthaginian and Numidian camps with his subsequent defeat of the reserve force, and Lælius' victory over Syphax, followed by Masinissa's capture of Cirta, his capital. These subjects scarcely admit of the variety of poetic treatment conspicuous in the other books. The numbering of the books, as we have them, appears to be not Petrarch's but that of Coluccio Salutati, his first editor. Therefore)—

<sup>1</sup> This is plain from Lib. III. 420-423 and Lib. IV. 6. P. expresses his strong disapproval of Virgil's aspersion upon Dido's character in *Sen.* IV. 5 (to F. Aretino).

<sup>2</sup> Koerting (p. 663) thinks it is "idle" to decide whether the poem was ever completed. Surely it is equally "idle" to assume that P. was "under the delusion" that he had finished it, when he may have done so and afterwards cancelled a part.

BOOK V. begins with the entry of Masinissa into Cirta and his meeting with Sophonisba, the beautiful Carthaginian wife of Syphax. In her early years she had been betrothed to Masinissa ; but her father, Hasdrubal Gisco, had given her to Syphax that she might divert him, as she had done successfully, from alliance with Rome. The Queen entreats the African Prince to put her to death in order to save her from the hands of the Romans ; but Masinissa, enslaved by his old passion, becomes himself the suppliant and urges her to contract marriage with himself that he may be better able to protect her. After at first refusing, she consents ; and the survival of Syphax as a prisoner appears to be no obstacle.<sup>1</sup> When (after Scipio's interview with the King) the affair reaches the former's ears, he reads Masinissa a severe lecture on the virtue of continence, and informs him that the Queen is the property of the Roman people. Masinissa's consequent distress and mental conflict are well described in 250 lines (438-688) ; in these he appears as the " desperate lover " of modern times. Should he fly with his beloved to a distant shore, or join Carthage and prove false to his new allies, or lay violent hands upon himself, or send Sophonisba a cup of poison to save her from captivity at Rome ? He decides sorrowfully upon the last unheroic alternative ; and on the arrival of his messenger the Queen, without reproaches against her lover but with curses prophetic of Scipio's future exile, drinks the poison and expires.

BOOK VI. begins with her arrival in " hell " and the decision of its judges as to her final abode ; and this episode, though possibly imitated from Virgil,<sup>2</sup> seems strangely misplaced at the opening of a new book. Scipio comforts his disconsolate ally with the gift of the Numidian kingdom and with other presents, and then sends the prisoners under Lælius' escort to Rome. The poet imagines the mournful reflections of Syphax on the shore and his hope that they may be wrecked and drowned on the way. Meanwhile the authorities at Carthage, terrified at their defeat, send separate legations to Rome and to Scipio with proposals of peace ; the former is met by Lælius on his return and conducted by him to Rome, where its overtures are rejected by the Senate. The Carthaginians also send messages to Hannibal in Bruttium and to his brother Mago in Liguria,

<sup>1</sup> P. follows almost exactly the account in Livy (XXX. 12-15) who says nothing of Syphax's death ; but Carlini supposed (p. 82) that P. calls Sophonisba " vidua " from a rumour that Syphax had been killed by his subjects (though no such rumour is mentioned) and that Sophonisba was free. The word is indeed placed in her mouth, but later on P. says " *Vulgus adulterii signabat nomine factum* " (l. 276).

<sup>2</sup> *Æn.* VI. 450-473, but there the hero himself has entered hell. Carlini's suggestion that Sophonisba's case recalls that of Dido (in *Æn.* IV.), ignores the fact that P. rejected that episode (see n. 1, p. 227).



urging their immediate return. The gloomy voyage of the invader of Italy along the coasts of Sicily is described at length. The main incidents of this book are taken, almost unaltered, from the last of Livy's third decade; but the description of Mago's voyage and his dying speech are original, and though censured at the time as utterly inappropriate,<sup>1</sup> are among the chief beauties of the poem. Mago had been severely wounded in a recent battle, and in fact he died off the Sardinian coast; Petrarch, however, takes him along the Riviera di Levante and places his death at the mouth of the Tiber. Mago's reflexions on death are those of a modern and of a subordinate in the main story; but it is to the poet's credit that for once he can see pathos in the untimely end of an enemy.

BOOK VII. begins with the landing in Africa of Hannibal, still ignorant of his brother's death and hopeful of his arrival. Then follows the incident of the Carthaginian spy, who was detected and afterwards conducted round the Roman lines by command of Scipio. Next we have the historic interview between Hannibal and Scipio in which the former proposes peace and the latter indignantly rejects it. Both speeches follow the main lines of those in Livy; but in Petrarch's version of Scipio's there is a "theocratic intonation,"<sup>2</sup> according to which the Roman displays his confidence in God and in the justice of his cause and rebukes the atheism of his opponent. On the separation of the leaders both armies prepare for the fight. Before they engage the scene is changed to "heaven," where at the throne of "Jove" two matrons, representing Carthage and Rome, plead the cause of their respective cities. This is plainly in imitation of the intercession of Venus for the Trojans against Juno in the first book of the *Æneid*.<sup>3</sup> But Petrarch, as a Christian poet, conceived himself to be debarred from the mythological scheme of Virgil. His "Jove" is the Christian Almighty, who keeps in reserve the secrets of the future, foretelling only the Incarnation of His Son in a virgin's womb and promising that whichever city obtains the victory shall be the seat of His kingdom. From the classical standpoint the scene is out of place; for there has been hitherto no hint of Divine intervention, and the prediction would have been meaningless to the two supplicants. Yet Petrarch considered Zama "the decisive battle of the world," and he wished to emphasize that its issue, in which was involved the eternal pre-eminence of Rome, lay in the Divine decree. The poet then versifies the exhortations given to their troops by both commanders; and the struggle is described, not in minute detail, but with a force

<sup>1</sup> See above, pp. 182, 183, and below (Chap. XVIII.), p. 325.

<sup>2</sup> Carlini, p. 113.

<sup>3</sup> *Æn.* I. 220-295.



and enthusiasm befitting a crisis so supreme. The book ends with the defeat of Hannibal and his flight to Carthage.

Book VIII. opens with a discussion by the victorious captains as to the greatest general in history. While Masinissa votes for Alexander of Macedon, Scipio extols the merits of Hannibal; and Lælius draws the conclusion that Hannibal's conqueror must take the highest place. The defeated hero advises Carthage to sue for peace, and then flees by sea to the East—an event which did not really take place till nine years later (193 B.C.). The end of the book is historical, containing Scipio's pacification of Africa, an account of the terror prevailing in Rome when the issue was in the balance, the opposition of the consuls to the destruction of Carthage, the mission and speech of Hasdrubal to the Senate and his visit to the suffering prisoners of his race.

Book IX. may be styled the united "Triumph" of Valour and Poetic Genius. Peace has been concluded, and Scipio is sailing home in fair weather with his intimate friends, among whom is the poet Ennius.<sup>1</sup> The latter discourses of poetry and of the meaning of the laurel crown, and then relates to Scipio a dream in which Homer appeared to him on the eve of the battle of Zama. The blind poet, whose soul Ennius believed to have entered his own body in a dream,<sup>2</sup> foretells the victory of the following day and then, as modern commentators believe,<sup>3</sup> was to have passed in review the achievements of later Roman poetry. But here occurs the second "lacuna"; and we have only the last triumph of Roman Literature presented to the dreaming Ennius—the vision of the latest poet, still fifteen hundred years distant, who is to set the final seal upon Scipio's renown (ll. 216-283). There follows an eloquent description of Scipio's triumph at Rome and of his ascent to the Capitol with Ennius always at his side, who is also decorated with the laurel crown. Thirty lines are then devoted to a lament for the death of King Robert; and Petrarch dismisses his poem with the sure hope that it will find its meed of appreciation in a more lettered age that is soon to come.

<sup>1</sup> The presence of Ennius with Scipio in Africa is an anachronism. His acquaintance with the hero began later; and at this time, when Cato took him to Rome from Sardinia (204 B.C.) he had composed no poetry. In the last book of his lost *Annals* (in which, however, he is dealing with his own time about 172 B.C.) he, like P., inserts a boastful allusion to himself. (See Conington, *Miscell. Works*, I. p. 344.)

<sup>2</sup> P. can hardly be alluding to this dream here, for it took place on Parnassus. See Cicero (*Acad.* II.), Persius (*Prol.* 2, 3, and *Sat.* VI. 10), and cf. Horace, *Ep.* II. i. 50 ("alter Homerus").

<sup>3</sup> Carlini, p. 36; Corradini, p. 392.

## BOOK IV

PETRARCH AS PENITENT, PATRIOT, AND PAPAL  
MESSENGER (1343-1347)





## CHAPTER XVI

### PETRARCH'S "SECRET" (OR "THE SECRET CONFLICT OF HIS CARES")<sup>1</sup>

#### HIS RELIGIOUS LIFE

THE underlying motive of the three dialogues with St. Augustine in the *Secret* is an attempt to discover a common ground between the love of the Pagan classics, which was Petrarch's ruling passion, and the scheme of Christian faith and practice imposed upon him by tradition and by the consensus of the mediæval world. But if the book had been no more than this, it would have lacked that full revelation of character which is its chief value to-day. It proceeds on the basis of a rigorous examination of conscience—not conducted according to any prescribed spiritual rule, but dealing with the symptoms of his soul's disease, as they appeared to himself. It is a sort of subjective autobiography—concerned with the moral phenomena of his personality rather than with external events. As such, it is an extraordinary presentation of the man in his weakness and in his strength and of the contrast between himself and his contemporaries.

If we take the whole gamut of "religious experiences," we shall find no book quite like it. It lacks the reverence and assured peace of its exemplar, the *Confessions* of Saint Augustine. It has little of the agonized remorse, strangely mingled with conventional pietism, which confronts us in so many "Evangelical

<sup>1</sup> In the Preface P. calls it "My Secret"; the second title is found in a letter of 1362 from Barbato to P. (published by M. Vattasso, *op. cit.* p. 14). This title is found in all the MSS. of the fourteenth century, among which is the codex (at Florence), said to have been copied by Tedaldo della Casa from P.'s original. The title of the folios—*De Contemptu Mundi*—is found as an alternative in a fourteenth-century codex at Paris, in the "Ashburnham" codex (now at Florence) and in many fifteenth-century MSS. There is no evidence that P. himself ever employed this title, which was adopted for a very different kind of treatise by Pope Innocent III.

penitents." It has no sickly sentimentalism, no shameless portraiture of vice, like that of Rousseau's *Confessions*, with which it has yet been absurdly compared. It is wholly alien from the mystical experiences of "A Beautiful Soul" in *Wilhelm Meister*, so powerfully delineated by one who was himself an unbeliever. It is simply an analysis of his own moral state by a man of letters, with a deep and a new interest in his own personality, yet also by conviction a sincere Christian, harbouring no shadow of doubt as to revealed truth.<sup>1</sup>

I know no passage in all his works, which can be brought into conflict with this last statement. But though not deficient in a settled faith,<sup>2</sup> he was often sadly deficient in hope<sup>3</sup>; and this common failing was due, as with most men, to a lively sense of sin and of his own infirmity of purpose. In his early days he was wont to relegate his Christianity to the background in the throng of literary interests engrossing his life; and in spite of the sane counsels of John of Florence,<sup>4</sup> which yet he never forgot, he cultivated the intellectual side of his nature to the neglect of the spiritual. Nor did his connexion with prominent ecclesiastics avail to counteract this tendency. He could not but mark the secular motives, nay even the moral corruption, of many frequenters of the Papal Court, and he was content to accommodate his own practice to the low level, with its thin veneer of Christianity, that he found around him. He was naturally tenacious of early impressions; and just as his ruling passion dominated him to the last, so he never lost his sense of shame nor yet the firm hold on Christian truth, which was the

<sup>1</sup> The attempt of J. Owen (*Skeptics of the Italian Renaissance*, 1893, pp. 107-128) to reckon P. as a "sceptic" in any modern sense of the term, is in my judgment an utter failure. I could scarcely subscribe to a single sentence of his description of P.'s attitude to religion (see pp. 114-116); and here C. Segré (*Studi Petrarqueschi*, 1903, p. 92), whose knowledge of this able, but scarcely famous, book, proves his wide acquaintance with English literature, is in accord with my view. Owen (p. 116) quotes Koerting as saying (p. 562) that P. was "first a Pagan philosopher and secondly a Christian." I can find no such passage; it is an exaggeration of Koerting's carefully balanced judgment upon P.'s pessimistic work (*De Rem. Utr. Fort.*).

<sup>2</sup> See, especially, *F.* XVI. 4 (to an unknown friend, translated above, Vol. I. pp. 458-460).

<sup>3</sup> Among many passages see in particular *F.* VIII. 7 (Frac. I. 443—end of the first of the "twin" letters)—and *F.* X. 5. (Frac. II. 88, "me, nisi misericordia subvenerit, Tartarus manet").

<sup>4</sup> See above, Vol. I. p. 162.

heritage of his youth. His emotions were Christian ; his intellect was occupied with subjects which required no exercise of his faith ; his will seemed often stricken with a strange impotence.<sup>1</sup> What need is there, then, to ascribe the resulting conflict to some " mystical " element in his temper, which was his peculiar bane ?<sup>2</sup> It was the familiar struggle between religious principle and the secular spirit. His conscience had begun to tell him that he was leading a double life ; and that faculty now refused to be benumbed by the compromise which had hitherto satisfied him, as it has satisfied so many. His thoughts turned to a mentor whom he had already found useful, but whose counsels he had half forgotten—to St. Augustine, who had faced a like conflict and come off victorious. Why should not an imaginary shriving from such a quarter at length lead his soul to peace ?

We have seen<sup>3</sup> that Augustine had once been a potent influence upon the spiritual side of his nature. He calls him " the Sun of the Church " <sup>4</sup> ; in one of his latest letters he describes him as " incomparable, unapproachable." <sup>5</sup> Writing in 1367 on the saint's *Confessions* to his friend Donato,<sup>6</sup> he explains how great was his debt to it.

" I would have you know that that book was the means of introducing me to the whole of sacred literature, which in my arrogant youth, with a young man's insolence and—as I now plainly see—at the suggestion of the devil, I had avoided as low and unequal to secular writings—so great was my love of the latter and contempt of the former, and so false my estimate of myself ! That book so radically changed me—I do not say that I abandoned my early vices (would that I had forsaken them to-day !)—but that henceforth I neither despised nor hated sacred letters—nay, their rude simplicity soothed me and drew my unwilling eyes and ears towards them. In short, I began to love and admire them and to draw fewer flowers, perhaps, but more fruit from them than from those I had formerly so loved. It would have been strange for a Christian to have been nowise changed by the eloquence of Augustine when, as he records

<sup>1</sup> See *F.* VII. 18 (Frac. I. 404, " peculiaris inertia mea ") and specially *F.* X. 5 (Frac. II. 97, 98).

<sup>2</sup> A. Bartoli (*op. cit.*), Cap. II.

<sup>3</sup> See Vol. I. pp. 306, 326, 327, 330.

<sup>4</sup> *F.* IV. 15 (Frac. I. 238).

<sup>5</sup> *Sen.* XVII. 2 (Frac.) to Boccaccio (B. ed. p. 1068).

<sup>6</sup> *Sen.* VIII. 6 from Pavia (June 10th).



in the third book,<sup>1</sup> the 'Hortensius' of Cicero had so changed him."

The last sentence supplies a partial explanation of the attraction which Augustine's book had for the spirit of Petrarch. Standing upon the threshold of the Middle Ages, with his back towards the Pagan world, that great father never vilifies, as Tertullian and Arnobius had done, the old learning and culture which he had loved amid the follies of his youth. He freely acknowledges his debt to it—above all to Cicero, to Virgil, and to the Neoplatonists of Alexandria. He was willing, like Origen, to "spoil the Egyptians" by drawing all the acquirements of his Pagan days into the service of his new Master. Hence came that "sweet reasonableness" which enabled him in the "City of God" to reply so forcibly to the Pagan charge that Christianity had ruined the world. Nearly a thousand years passed away; and Petrarch, with his back to that chequered period of spiritual growth and intellectual twilight, was eager to restore the old "humanities" without injuring the Christian structure which had taken their place. To him the intervening centuries were almost a blank; they conveyed no lesson, except the transience of human things. His "golden age" lay far back in the days of the Republic and the early Empire, when the "Pax Romana" could be imposed by a central authority; and he dreamed that that authority was not dead, but only dormant, and could be restored under the ægis of the Church. He wanted to establish a kind of "modus vivendi" between the old half-extinct civilization and the claims of the Christian conscience. He dimly saw that there was still a hostile obscurantism in the Church, as there had been in the days of the declining Empire; and he was uneasy lest his own failings, his own dreams of personal glory, should not stand the genuine Christian test. He would take the great Christian father, who witnessed the crash of imperial Rome, as his imaginary confessor and make a clean breast of his own infirmities. He would write rather for himself than for his contemporaries, who would fail to understand him. But posterity might be interested in "the travail of his soul"; and in any case it was contrary to his nature to disregard literary form.

<sup>1</sup> *Conf.* III. (iv.) 7.

The idea was wholly novel ; and its chief novelty lay, not in the use of fiction in a matter of spiritual counsel—but in the strong sense of individuality, which dominated the penitent. One of the most striking features of the Middle Ages is that for centuries men moved and acted not as individuals, but in corporations<sup>1</sup> ; the chief achievement of mediæval jurists was the evolution of corporation-law.<sup>2</sup> No doubt great men made their appearance then, as at all times ; but their will-power gained them prominence not as representatives of themselves, but simply of the causes which they championed, of the groups which they led. They had no true subjectivity ; their self-consciousness, so far as they had it, was in reality only a group-consciousness. I do not mean, of course, that mankind in Europe ever sank into a Chinese uniformity of type ; the groups were very various and diversified, and they tended to multiply, as civilization advanced. Moreover, Christianity had enhanced the dignity of human nature by the teaching that it had a nobler part, which would survive the death of the body. Consequently men were pre-occupied with the soul and its eternal destiny ; the "microcosm" of the total personality was a sealed book to them. Even so great a genius as Dante, with all his learning and force of character, was only concerned with this pre-occupation, could only interpret it in terms which appealed to the multitude. Petrarch, however, without any psychological apparatus to his hand, was absorbed in the problem of his complete personality ; and this fact, as has been truly said, constitutes him the prophet of a new era. Although he admired—at a distance—the self-renunciation of the cloister, he remained to the last the sturdy champion of his own rights as an individual.

The era which he inaugurated did not begin with a conscious revolt against any existing order, but with discovery—the discovery that "the proper study of mankind is man." To use the striking parallel of Voigt,

"Petrarch, like him who discovered the New World beyond the ocean and died without suspecting his discovery, did not foresee the modern world which began with himself ; both supposed that they had arrived at the Old World by traversing another

<sup>1</sup> Voigt, *Wiederbelebung*, I. 128 seq.

<sup>2</sup> See Otto von Gierke, *The Political Theories of the Middle Age*, translated by F. W. Maitland (1900), pp. xix., xl., 1, 6, 64.

route. But Petrarch felt something within him, which told him that alone among men, alone in the presence of God, he lived at an infinite distance from his fellows." <sup>1</sup>

The last sentence, perhaps, is over-emphatic ; but the poet's intense self-consciousness was indeed a new phenomenon which goes far to explain, if not to excuse, the huge thirst for glory, the many exhibitions of petty vanity, which were his conspicuous defects. It explains, too, the perpetual conflict, so prominent in the *Secret*, between his own ideals and those of his generation, between the humanist within him and the ascetic. He is never quite sure that the liberty which he claims may not degenerate into licence, or indeed whether it has not already done so in his own case. His doubts, on such points, are styled by Koerting <sup>2</sup> "the travail pangs by which the modern man was born out of the mediæval."

And yet these pricks of conscience never affected his method of study, which he was aware was new and widely different from that of his contemporaries. He read the ancient writers as if they were men, and not shadows ; he considered books, not as mere storehouses of words and facts and propositions, but as containing the living thoughts of writers with whom he enjoyed imaginary converse.<sup>3</sup> To him Cicero, Seneca, and Augustine were not mere names, but individuals, in whom he discerned the reflexion of his own personality. Helped by his vivid imagination, he used to hold, as he read their works, long and animated dialogues with them—recorded sometimes in part on the margins of his books,<sup>4</sup> sometimes in an elaborate epistle addressed to them in the "shades below."<sup>5</sup> Machiavelli somewhere speaks of the old Roman authors as being similarly his living companions ; and the most conspicuous modern instances are Macaulay and Landor. It was the habit of the first, when he was studying some special period, to construct romances about its chief personages and also lively dialogues between them, as he paced the crowded streets of London <sup>6</sup> ; the latter

<sup>1</sup> Voigt (*op. cit.*), I. 130.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 646.

<sup>3</sup> This might be illustrated from many passages of his letters : the chief is *Ep. Metr.* I. vii. (quoted above, Chap. XIII. p. 67).

<sup>4</sup> See P. de Nolhac (*P. et l'Hum.*, *passim*) and Chap. XLII. below.

<sup>5</sup> The "Letters to Dead Authors" ; *F.* XXIV. 3-12.

<sup>6</sup> See Trevelyan's *Life* (cr. 8vo. ed.), p. 133. We have a specimen



endeavoured in his vigorous prose to reproduce such *Imaginary Conversations*—occasionally with some attempt to “set the scene” in its contemporary colours. Neither of these writers succeeded in eliminating their “personal equation” from these efforts; but they did strive after some dramatic fitness in the sentiments expressed by their historic characters. The result was a sort of literary “make-believe,” no more likely to bear a semblance of reality than the dialogue in a historical novel. Petrarch could probably never have made any effort of this kind; he was not concerned with such “accessories,” as he would have deemed them, but rather with the expression of his own views, through the mouth of his chosen interlocutor. His Augustine bears not the remotest resemblance to the sanctified penitent of the *Confessions*; he is simply the “Dr. Jekyll” of Petrarch’s personality admonishing its sometimes submissive, sometimes reluctant “Mr. Hyde”—in short, the mediæval ascetic within him lecturing the libertine humanist.

But to say this is not to assert that his Augustine is a mere “lay-figure,” or that there is no fitness in Petrarch’s choice of him as a confidant. He selected him because he felt that there was a kinship of nature between them, because Augustine had passed triumphantly through the very struggle in which he now found himself involved. He says in an earlier letter already quoted <sup>1</sup> that he is sure Augustine loves him and pities him from his heavenly abode. Yet he adds at once that the perusal of the *Confessions* makes his own life seem “but a light dream, a fleeting phantom.” Sometimes the pages seem to shake him out of a profound sleep; but anon, “by the pressure of my mortal frame, my eyelids close; I wake and sleep by turns. My will wavers, my desires clash, and in clashing tear me in two. The outer man wars against the inner.” It is this strife which is so graphically portrayed in the *Secret*.

But though Augustine’s experiences may have suggested the subject, there is no deliberate imitation of the *Confessions* in Petrarch’s work. The standpoint of the two books is wholly different. Augustine writes when the struggles of his youth are over, and his conversion an accomplished fact—writes not,

in the *Conversation between Mr. Abraham Cowley and Mr. John Milton touching the Great Civil War* (Miscellaneous Works, pp. 59–71).

<sup>1</sup> F. II, 9 (Frac. I. 123). See Vol. I. p. 329, n. 1.

as Petrarch, to console and strengthen himself in the midst of conflict, but to render glory to God for his deliverance and provide at once a warning and an example to others. Petrarch writes, while still in the perplexed and fluctuating state of Augustine, after he had read the *Hortensius* and before he had passed through the throes of conversion. There are therefore, as is fitting, no spiritual raptures in the *Secret*—indeed very little real penitence. There is acknowledgment of fault—often extorted rather than confessed—but very little sense of the heinousness of sin; there is also a good deal of morbid self-pity—one of Petrarch's worst failings—which the saint hardly castigates as it deserves. In short, the book is rather a merciless analysis of personal character than a confession properly so called.

Its dialogue-form also differentiates it from Augustine's book, which is quite free from special pleading, and might be called "the devout soliloquy of a reclaimed sinner." The main design of the *Secret* required a dialogue; for it is a kind of "setting of the lists" between humanism and asceticism, in which Petrarch's inclinations were on one side and his conscience on the other. Whatever may be said of the arguments, the conversation is managed with much skill and dramatic power; it is vastly superior to the chilly scholastic debates between personified "Reason" and "Joy," "Hope," "Grief" or "Fear," which he composed later in his *Remedies for both kinds of Fortune*. He had before him as models the dialogues in some of Cicero's philosophical treatises<sup>1</sup>; the only work of Plato then accessible to him was a Latin translation of the *Timæus*,<sup>2</sup> which has less dialogue in it than the rest. But perhaps he was not so much influenced by these—either as to matter or form—as by the *De Animi Tranquillitate* of Seneca, to which he expressly refers.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> At the end of the preface he calls Cicero "his dear master" and notes that the form of his dialogues was imitated from Plato.

<sup>2</sup> With a commentary by Chalcidius (?4th century). P.'s copy of this work is still in existence at Paris, enriched with his marginal notes (*P. et L'Hum.* ii. 141). To explain P.'s claim that he had more than one Latin dialogue of Plato in 1367 (B. ed. p. 1162) de Nohac supposes that he copied at Naples at the end of 1343 the rendering of the *Phædo* and *Meno* by Aristippus (*P. et L'Hum.* ii. 140, 241). I am not sure that this conjecture is necessary or well founded; if P. had read the *Phædo* we should find more trace of it in his works.

<sup>3</sup> Dial. II. (B. ed. p. 395). The work appears in his early catalogue (see Chap. XXXIV.).

There is a community of sentiment and literary style between Petrarch and Seneca, which was noticed four centuries ago.<sup>1</sup> The letters of our poet owe far more to Seneca than to Cicero; and the resemblance of subject between the *Secret* and this epistolary treatise can hardly be accidental. Seneca, on returning from his Corsican exile to the social whirlpool of Rome, feels an inward disgust at the shams and shows of court life; and yet he honestly admits that he values the high consideration which his abilities and his riches obtained for him in the capital. His outer life seems to himself an assumed mask, a perpetual hypocrisy; and he sorrowfully recognizes the conflict between his theories as a Stoic and his inclinations in practice. In giving moral counsel to his kinsman Serenus,<sup>2</sup> he is feeling his way towards the best means of reaching the repose of mind, for which he yearns. Here we have an almost Christian remorse for inconsistency of conduct, combined with a flavour of modern pessimism, which is induced by infirmity of will and the hard requirements of practical life. So far the resemblance to the *Secret* is singularly close. Seneca's malady is much like Petrarch's and results in a similar kind of "accidie" or melancholy; but there is this wide difference—that Seneca knows nothing of an unseen Master, and therefore the inconsistency is merely between his own ideals and his practice. Petrarch knows that the claims of Christ are paramount, and that He will not be satisfied with a half-service. For this reason he could not have taken Seneca for his mentor in the dialogue; he chose Augustine because he was a priest and could speak with authority as his spiritual director. But just as Seneca's counsel to Serenus was easier for the philosopher to give than to follow himself, so Petrarch after the imagined discussion between his worse and his better self, was still confronted by the weakness of his will and could only ask for the prayers of his "guide" that he might be directed along the right path.

For the comprehension of Petrarch's spiritual history it is important to fix as exactly as possible the date of the composition

<sup>1</sup> G. Squarzafico, in his life of P. (1501), calls him "the modern Seneca" ("recentior Seneca," B. ed. p. vii.).

<sup>2</sup> He is said to have been the "Annæus Serenus," a relative, and captain of Nero's bodyguard, who died from eating poisonous fungi. He had asked Seneca for counsel, and the philosopher gives it with all the more care because he needed it himself.



of the *Secret*. I have already stated my belief that it was written in the spring of 1343, though perhaps begun in the preceding winter. In the third Dialogue he says <sup>1</sup> that it was in "the sixteenth year" of his love for "Laura," which ended on April 6, 1343; in the second he says that he had "lately" <sup>2</sup> been reading the Greek of Plato with Barlaam's help, but had been interrupted by the latter's departure. On the strength of these passages Fracassetti <sup>3</sup> dates the *Secret* in 1342, before the end of which year it may have been begun; but both passages agree equally well with the early months of 1343. A Florentine MS.<sup>4</sup> of the *Secret*, which is said to have been copied from Petrarch's original, supplies in a note the dates of 1353 for the first dialogue, 1349 for the second, and 1347 for the third. If the reference here is to the actual composition, we should have to deny all unity to a work written in so haphazard a fashion. But such unity undoubtedly exists, as we shall proceed to show; and it seems to follow that the dialogues must have been written in their present order. If the note be from Petrarch's hand, it must therefore refer not to the composition, but to the revision of the work <sup>5</sup>; and a few passages of possibly later date than 1343 may have been then inserted. Signora Carlini Minguzzi, the most recent commentator, reinforces the date of 1343 by a passage <sup>6</sup> which may refer to the actual or proximate date of the birth of Petrarch's daughter Francesca <sup>7</sup>; but although

<sup>1</sup> B. ed. p. 398.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 390. The Master of the Temple, in his translation (p. 77), misplaces the word "nuper."

<sup>3</sup> (*It.*) iv. p. 94. Koerting and Bartoli also suggest this date; but Tiraboschi, Baldelli, Segré and others prefer 1343.

<sup>4</sup> This is the MS. now in the Laurentian Library, written by Tedaldo della Casa of Santa Croce within twenty years of P.'s death. The first to record the note was Mehus (*Vita di Ambrogio Traversari*, 1759, p. 237). It is mentioned by Voigt (*op. cit.* I. p. 132) who—without quoting its exact terms—seems to exaggerate its importance, and by E. Carlini-Minguzzi in her *Studio sul Secretum di F. P.* (Bologna, 1906), p. 45, whose views I have adopted in the text.

<sup>5</sup> Possibly merely to the completion of the first fair copy, if the dialogues begin on separate sheets, and if the date occurs at the end of each.

<sup>6</sup> ("P."), "Meo pondere in antiquas miseras relapsus." (Aug.), "Cadentem te (before the birth of Giovanni) et resurgentem vidi, et nunc prostratum misertus." B. ed. p. 390.

<sup>7</sup> *Op. cit.* pp. 12, 13. Cf. de Sade (II. 139); Baldelli (p. 204); and Fracassetti (*It.*) ii. p. 261). The other passage on which critics rely, viz. that in *Ep. Post.* where P. places his reformation in his fortieth year, is weakened by the fact that in *Sen.* VIII. 1, he places it seven years later, after the Jubilee. The exact date of Francesca's marriage to F. da Brossano is not known, but it was before 1362.

that event has been probably fixed in the early months of 1343, the date rests chiefly upon inference from this very passage, and therefore the argument becomes viciously circular. My own belief is that the third dialogue was written in the Lent of 1343—a season for which the poet would think it a profitable occupation—and the first two dialogues in the months immediately preceding. It was Petrarch's habit to revise his works in moments of leisure; but the year 1347 was too full of other tasks and of the excitement caused by Cola's enterprise to make it possible that the third dialogue—nearly as long as the other two combined—was then composed.

Some critics<sup>1</sup> can detect no trace of system in the three dialogues or in the subjects discussed; at any rate their comments show no sense of the existence of an ordered plan. But it is one of the features which give the book its modern savour that while all divisions and sub-divisions of the scholastic type are rigidly excluded,<sup>2</sup> there are yet very plain signs of orderly arrangement in the topics debated<sup>3</sup>; here at least Petrarch notably displays the artist's power of "concealing his art." There are occasional digressions, and also numerous citations from the classics and from his own works—some no doubt inserted in the process of revision; but though the connecting thread is sometimes out of sight, it is never completely dropped. The dialogues are supposed to take place on three successive days. The first is preliminary, and clears the ground for confession; it gives an excellent account of the poet's psychological temperament, laying special stress on his infirmity of will. The second exposes the faults which he shares with ordinary men and therefore knows that he ought to overcome—ending, however, with melancholy (*accidie*), which he supposes to be due to the special cruelty of Fortune. In these two dialogues the ascetic side of Petrarch's nature is in the ascendant, and his director finds him a not intractable subject. In the third Augustine springs a mine under his penitent by the charge that his salvation is

<sup>1</sup> As Voigt and Segré. The latter's work is rather an essay on the character of P. than on the *Secret*; but the former says (I. 134, n.), that the order of the confessions is neither "important nor essential."

<sup>2</sup> In this respect we see a strong contrast between the *Secret* and the Laureate address on the uses of poetry.

<sup>3</sup> I am indebted here to the excellent chapter of Carlini-Minguzzi on the unity of the work (pp. 127-131).

imperilled by two overmastering passions—an ideal devotion to a mortal woman and the love of earthly glory. Thereupon the humanist in Petrarch awakes, and after vainly denying that these things are evils, he listens with more or less impatience to the remedies proposed. This dialogue deals with presumptuous sins, to which the sinner represents himself as blind; and the love of fame is rightly put last because Petrarch knew it to be his strongest passion. There is, then, an upward process from faults that are obvious and common to those that, being secret and inveterate, are far less easy to overcome. And the result, as we might expect, is a rather feeble compromise on the latter subject; the contest between humanism and asceticism ends in a sort of “stalemate.”

The *Secret* is now open to English readers in a translation<sup>1</sup> which is spirited, but not always accurate and occasionally too free. But the work is so important for a study of Petrarch's character that I have tried to give an imperfect analysis, passing lightly, however, over the portion relating to “Laura,” which has already been treated at some length.<sup>2</sup>

### *Preface.*

One day, while meditating on the origin and the destiny of life, Petrarch becomes aware of a “Presence” beside him. It is that of a very beautiful Lady, surrounded by an Ineffable Light, who in gentle words announces that she has come to his succour. She declares herself to be “Truth,” whose palace on the summit of Mt. Atlas he had described in his *Africa*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Petrarch's Secret or The Soul's Conflict with Passion*, translated by W. H. Draper—now Master of the Temple—(London, 1911).

<sup>2</sup> In Vol. I. Chaps. VII. and VIII.

<sup>3</sup> This allusion has not been certainly identified with any extant passage of the *Africa*, and it is possible, as Corradini doubtfully hints (*op. cit.* p. 422), that the description of this “Palace of Truth” may have been contained in the lost books. He suggests as an alternative (which is scarcely preferable) that it may refer to the whole poem as an exposition of historical truth, mentioning also the opinion (adopted by Carlini, p. 31, n.), that the reference is to Lib. II. ll. 377–388. But in that passage there is no elaborate (“*mirabili artificio*”) description of a “palace,” nor is there a word about “Truth”; it is merely an allusion to the nocturnal abode of the gods fabled by the poets. In the *Africa* as we have it, no “palace” is described, except that of Syphax (Lib. III.), which was not on Mt. Atlas. My own impression is that it is a confused reminiscence of those two passages.



After some conversation (which is not given) he perceives at her side an old man of venerable aspect, whom he recognizes at once as Augustine. "Truth" appeals to the saint to come to the rescue of this mortal man, now encompassed by the same temptations which beset himself when he was upon earth. Petrarch, she says, will pay more attention to truth, when it is declared by a human voice; but she will herself be present at the interview as a silent Judge. Augustine assents with a kindly greeting to the poet; and the three withdraw to a retired spot for the ensuing conversation. Petrarch says that he has recorded it in this book for his own benefit in order to refresh his memory in the future. His aim is higher than to win himself credit by classing it with his other works. He calls it his *Secret*, and bids it flee from the haunts of men and stay with him, that he may con over in secret the counsels which it contains.

This prologue was evidently written after the book was completed, as our poet notes elsewhere<sup>1</sup> that prefaces generally are. There is no reason to question the sincerity of his assertion that it was not intended for the public.<sup>2</sup> He never alludes to it in his extant letters—even in those to his Carthusian brother; but his attention to literary form makes it probable that he intended posterity to read it; and indeed many copies were taken of it soon after his death. The scheme of the prologue has been compared with the first two cantos of Dante's great poem.<sup>3</sup> In both works a gracious lady in the realms of bliss pities a sinner wandering in the desert of this world; in both she employs one whose writings were dear to the wanderer to recall him from the error of his way. Had "Laura" been dead when the *Secret* was written, she might have been identified with "Truth," as Beatrice is with Revelation or Divine Philosophy. Such a similarity can hardly be accidental; indeed the assumption that Petrarch had never read the *Commedia*<sup>4</sup> till

<sup>1</sup> *Sen.* XVI. 1 (Frac.). "Proœmio, quod in libro primum, in inventione ultimum esse solet."

<sup>2</sup> Voigt (I. 142), says that P. "made haste to publish it," alleging as proof the following words (B. ed. p. 410), "si quis forte aurem in sermones nostros intulerit"; i.e. the saint refrains from mentioning the evil effects upon P. of his fatal passion, "lest they should get abroad." Surely, as suggested above, P. may refer here only to posterity.

<sup>3</sup> Fuzet, pp. 175, 176, Carlini-Minguzzi, p. 36.

<sup>4</sup> Carlini-Minguzzi thinks this objection conclusive and supposes that P. would never have borrowed from an Italian poem in a Latin work. But there is no question here of acknowledged indebtedness.

Boccaccio presented him with a copy in 1359 is unwarranted by the terms of his acknowledgment of the gift. He is careful to say, not that he had never read it, but that he had purposely never acquired a copy, lest he should be so imbued with the diction of Dante as to detract from the originality of his own style.<sup>1</sup> There is evidence<sup>2</sup> that "the sacred poem" was read with eagerness at Bologna in the very years when the young law-student was giving to Italian poetry the time that he ought to have spent upon law. But the resemblance may be due rather to an unconscious reminiscence than to intentional imitation. Both poets were certainly indebted<sup>3</sup> to Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, in which the figure of Philosophy visits the imprisoned Senator in his cell, sits upon his pallet, and endeavours to comfort him in his undeserved sufferings. In Petrarch, however, the resemblance lies chiefly in the external appearance of the Heavenly Visitor, whom he (like Boethius) represents as possessing eyes of such piercing brilliance that his own could not bear to meet their gaze. In the dialogues of the *Secret* no part is assigned to "Truth"; she presides over the discussion as a celestial Judge, before whom the sinner could not dare to utter what he knew to be false. But she is not merely an abstraction, meant to certify the truth of his disclosures; she stands, if I mistake not, for "Revealed Truth"—the Verity of the unseen world—whom mortals are so prone to forget or to deny. This is plain from his statement at the close<sup>4</sup> that it was her presence which gave force to Augustine's words, and that without her his own life would be "nothing at all." The saint styles her his Guide, Counsellor, Comforter and Queen<sup>5</sup>; Petrarch himself invokes her in each dialogue<sup>6</sup> as the highest witness to his own sincerity. It may almost be said—if we lay

<sup>1</sup> *F.* XXI. 15 (Frac. III. iii). See above, Vol. I. p. 209.

<sup>2</sup> See above, Vol. I. p. 128.

<sup>3</sup> For Dante cf. Dr. E. Moore's *Studies in Dante* (First Series), pp. 254, 255. For P. cf. Gaspari (Ital. trans.), p. 379. Carlini-Minguzzi (p. 43) thinks that P. is not directly imitating Boethius, apparently because P. "very seldom quotes his work" (her reference to de Nolhac is false, and does not represent the latter's opinion). But P. quotes the *Consolatio* frequently (de Nolhac, ii. 106, n. 6); the work is included in his first catalogue (see Chap. XXXIV.); and he even quotes it once in the *Secret*.

<sup>4</sup> B. ed. p. 416.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, preface, p. 373.

<sup>6</sup> See below, p. 247, p. 259, and (for Dial. III.) B. ed. p. 401.

aside the trappings of the fable—that she stands for “The Spirit of Truth,” who is “to guide men into all truth.”

*Dialogue I.*

St. Augustine begins by saying that the knowledge of human misery, gained through frequent and concentrated meditation on death, is the surest way to escape the snares of the world. He lays down the proposition that a sufferer who ardently desires recovery and uses the best means is bound to attain his desire. The poet replies that there are many things we ardently desire and yet cannot obtain, and know that we never shall. He is told that this is true of earthly wishes, but not of the subject of their discussion. His long catalogue in reply of human ills that are inevitable brings upon him a severe reproof for having studied in vain so many volumes and for writing and reading so much merely in order to gain the applause of the crowd. At this outburst Petrarch blushes, he says, like a schoolboy accused of crime, who, conscious of his ignorance and of many misdemeanours, is not quite sure for which of them he is to be taken to task. Augustine rejoins that he shall have much to bring against him presently, but now it is only his assertion that anyone can be unhappy against his will. Philosophy has proved that virtue alone can make us happy. A man must aspire and avoid the beaten track; thus alone can he achieve the blessing reserved for those who have scaled the heights of heaven.<sup>1</sup> Petrarch recognizes this as the maxim of the Stoics, which he accepts; but still, solemnly invoking Truth, he persistently declares his own inability to rise. He is warned that nothing is so deadly as self-deception; and though he thinks he is not guilty of it, the saint insists that, since sin must of its own nature be voluntary, he must have fallen of his own free will. The poet sorrowfully admits that no man falls involuntarily; but then he shifts his ground by maintaining that, having fallen, he “cannot,” in spite of floods of tears, break the power of his faults. He can do nothing except “wish.” Augustine retorts

<sup>1</sup> Carlini-Minguzzi here (p. 52) wrongly accuses the saint of inconsistency. The “road trodden by the steps of very few,” which P. is exhorted to tread, is not that of earthly glory, but the way to Heaven (“sic itur ad astra,” quoted from *Æn.* IX. 641) (B. ed. p. 375).



that the words should be "will not," instead of "cannot"; he has witnessed plenty of tears, but very little will. He then refers to his own experience—how after long struggles his will became wholly changed. Petrarch describes the emotions with which he read that story,<sup>1</sup> but sadly points to the gulf that parts the saint in bliss from the storm-tossed sinner upon earth. He finds it hard to grant that he has "never wished what he believed that he had always wished." His mentor allows that he has wished sometimes, but appeals to his conscience that his wishes have been too faint to spur him to action. When Petrarch confesses he has been too lukewarm and begs the saint to show him how to be a good man, he is reminded that, if a desire is to be fruitful, it must have negative, as well as positive results; he must give up all lower wishes which do not minister to the highest.

At this point we reach the kernel of the first dialogue. The director has laid an unerring finger upon the chief mark which distinguishes asceticism from humanism; he has made the demand which Petrarch is never really ready to concede. At the moment the poet is in a yielding mood, and makes no objection: but this is because his asceticism is now uppermost; he assents to an abstract doctrine, but does not see whither it is carrying him. He is told, not that he must subordinate<sup>2</sup> the lower desires to the highest, but that he must "make an end of" the former in order to accomplish the latter. St. Augustine's ideal is that of the cloister, raised too far above this workaday world; it resembles the position of the teetotaller as contrasted with that of the moderate temperance reformer. At the same time, while speaking scornfully of Petrarch's pursuit of applause, he never explicitly condemns his literary occupations *per se*; and he is so far inconsistent (it is of course the poet himself who speaks) that he often pays him compliments,<sup>3</sup> direct or indirect, on the quality of his work. Another point to be noted is the almost "Pelagian" type of the saint's reproof. He, the

<sup>1</sup> *Confessions*, Lib. VIII. (xii.), 28–30.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Our Lord's saying, "Seek ye *first* (not seek ye *only*) the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (St. Matt. vi. 33).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. p. 374, "Tuque adeo ingeniosus" and p. 375 "provectionis te ingenii arbitrabar." The dialogues are strewn with citations from P.'s works, for which he is often expressly praised.

stout opponent of Pelagius and the writer on *The Grace of Christ*, seems to make everything depend on the strength of the sinner's will ; he scarcely alludes to the Divine Grace, and says very little here of prayer. Even in speaking of the crisis of his own "conversion" he uses no word that implies the agency of a higher Power ; the contrast in this respect with the narrative of the *Confessions* is patent. Evidently Petrarch, when he wrote, had given little study to his confessor's theological works. The reason for his sparing use of the Divine Name is not, I think, a dread of cant, but rather that he was so absorbed in the problem of his own weakness and unhappiness as to find little comfort in the faith which he professed.

In resuming his argument the saint insists strongly upon the need of frequent meditation on death, in order that man may be brought face to face with eternal realities. He will not accept Petrarch's assurance that he often practises this, and that he never forgets the definition of man in scholastic logic as "mortal." The poet is digressing on his favourite theme of the emptiness of logical sword-play, when he is interrupted by the reminder that to be aware of a fact is not the same thing as to be deeply impressed by it. He must let his imagination play on the outward phenomena of death—in the same way as certain Religious Orders insist on their members being present at the washing and shrouding of a corpse. There is just a faint parenthetical disapproval of this practice ; but the revolting physical details are described with a minuteness that must strike the reader as equally morbid. The sinner is not to imagine that he has realized all this until the terrible fact makes him shudder, grow still and pale, and feel himself about to appear at the bar of God's judgment. He must remember that death is not the end, but only a passage—that behind it there may lurk countless punishments and pains, which will be unending. If he thinks of these things not as fiction but as truth, not in despair but with a humble trust in God's mercy, his meditations will not have been in vain. Petrarch asseverates that he has often done this, but that there is some hidden obstacle which keeps him the same as he was before. He becomes no happier than the reckless sinner, who plunges gaily into the vortex of evil—nay, not so happy, if we forget the latter's miserable end. Why should this be? Augustine supposes it is because he still thinks of death as far away, since

he is yet in the vigour of manhood. The poet will not accept this explanation ; he is sure that he places no trust in the riches or the pleasures of this life and often regards death as possibly at his very door.

He is then reminded that his soul came forth from heaven, but has been tarnished by its contact with the body and the world. His trouble is that the plague of too many sense-impressions wounds the soul's thinking faculty and prevents him from mounting to the One Eternal Good. Petrarch remembers meeting with this thought in his confessor's book on *True Religion*, and it struck him as a new and arresting one. To his delight he finds that that treatise was suggested by a passage in his favourite Cicero<sup>1</sup> ; but he is quickly recalled from this literary pastime to the matter in hand. His weak spirit is being crushed by the multiplicity of external impressions, which make demands upon it that are too heavy ; it is like a plot of ground sown with too many seeds, which only choke each other as they spring up. The result is that his own overcrowded mind fluctuates continually, and can never put its whole strength to any one thing. As soon as it approaches some useful subject of meditation

“ it cannot stand there, but starts back under the impulse of a crowd of cares. Hence it comes that your wholesome purpose flags from its excessive inconstancy ; and there arises that internal discord of which we have been speaking, and that distress of soul enraged with itself, when it detests its own defilements, yet cleanses them not away—sees the crooked paths, yet forsakes them not—dreads the impending peril, yet does nothing to avoid it.”<sup>2</sup>

To this the poet can only reply ; “ Woe is me ! You have probed my wound to the quick ; there is the seat of my pain ; from this I fear my death will come.” He is consoled by the assurance that his torpor has fled ; and the first day's colloquy ends.

The above passage gives a vivid account of the source of Petrarch's soul-disease ; but the explanation is not quite complete. What he fails to see is that it is not merely the number, but the intensity of his impressions that makes them so fleeting. Here we are upon the ground of temperament rather than of

<sup>1</sup> *Tusculan Disputations*, i. 16.

<sup>2</sup> B. ed. p. 382.



character. We have already spoken of his extreme sensibility—inseparable, perhaps, from high artistic gifts, when the will is weak. Each successive wave of feeling, whether of joy or sorrow, is so intense as to weaken, if not destroy, the effect of its forerunners. The result is a series of moods, inconsistent with each other, which wear the appearance of complexity, but if taken singly, are more simple than they look. The cares and miseries upon which he so often dilates, though real enough in experience, could be quickly thrown aside by his industry and the activity of his intellect, which was the safety-valve of his sanguine temperament. Similarly his religious emotion faded into the background when displaced by others more powerful; but they were keen and sincere while they lasted. So much certainly could not be said of Chateaubriand, with whose René Petrarch has been unfairly compared.<sup>1</sup> The difference between our poet and the "Malades du Siècle," of whom René is an example, is that with them religion is a fashionable dress, which must be tried on and patronized; with him it is the indispensable postulate, with which his faulty practice has to be squared. The remedies, too, which he prescribes by the mouth of the saint seem to us as morbid and unreal as the affected "poses" of Chateaubriand; but we must remember that they were familiar to the asceticism of his time.

It may surprise us to find Petrarch's complaint of his own impotence silenced at once by a maxim of the Stoics. Yet while his earlier letters and his chief prose work<sup>2</sup> abound in Stoical principles, he fails lamentably to carry them out in practice.<sup>3</sup> His moral philosophy is perpetually at war with the intensity of his feelings; he had none of the "lofty disdain" which would have led Dante to despise petty attacks. This sensitiveness seems to have kept pace with his increasing renown—a fact which he himself admits with shame. In the preface to his first collection of letters in 1359 he tells his friend Socrates that he perceives a difference between his earlier and his later letters. The former contain strong and sober counsel for himself and his friends; the latter seem weak, dispirited and stuffed with querulous laments.<sup>4</sup> This self-criticism is perfectly sound;

<sup>1</sup> Bartoli, p. 79, quoting Quinet and Carducci.

<sup>2</sup> *De Rem. Utr. Fort.*

<sup>3</sup> Bartoli, pp. 18–20.

<sup>4</sup> Preface to *F.* (to Socrates), *Frac.* I. 24.

his pessimism plainly grew upon him with the years. He excuses himself by the pressure of misfortune—the loss of many friends and the catastrophe of the Plague. But in truth when the zest of life began to fail, and the successful pursuit of fame to pall, his theoretical Stoicism deserted him ; and his feelings—intense as ever and less easily repressed—took a more sombre tinge. His intellectual faith remained strong ; his daily life became purer and more strictly ordered ; but his emotions had to find vent in the luxury of sadness or in profitless and unseemly dispute. It should have been his director's aim to strengthen and purify his affections no less than his will ; but that task he defers to the last day's conference.

### *Dialogue II.*

On the second day the saint begins by inquiring whether his penitent is now more hopeful of himself, and receives the reply that he places his hope in God alone. While praised for this, he is warned that his foes are more numerous and determined than he imagines ; above all, he is exhorted never to despair for that would be the last and worst disaster. Augustine begins a long speech by accusing him of pride so extreme and self-complacent that it would lead him, as it led the rebel angels, even to hate his Creator.<sup>1</sup> He plumes himself upon personal gifts, by which he ought rather to be humbled, when he reflects that they were bestowed for no merit of his own. The dependants of an earthly lord are keen to show their gratitude for favours undeserved.

The gifts of which he is so proud are intellect, knowledge, eloquence, and a handsome person. As to the first, the meanest of men are far cleverer in many things than he ; and if he sensibly measures his boasted knowledge, he must confess that, as compared to what he might know, it is but a tiny rill beside the mighty ocean. The saint asks, of what use is all this knowledge and eloquence to its possessor ? It may tickle the ears of the crowd ; but in the depths of his own heart the writer cannot join in the applause. Or is he as infatuated with hearing his own voice as those little birds, who sing themselves to death with

<sup>1</sup> He does not exactly say (as Voigt suggests, I. p. 134) that P. has actually hated his Creator ; he warns him that such self-complacency as his would lead to this.

rapture at the sweetness of their song? He knows well that the phrases of the boor are often more impressive and adequate than his own; and he not seldom laments how poor an instrument language is to express his own ideas and the beauty of Nature. "How often have I heard you complain, how often seen you dumb and indignant, because neither your tongue nor your pen could properly express ideas quite plain to your own mind and easy of comprehension!"<sup>1</sup> The conclusion—that Eloquence is a weak and limited thing—gives rise to a long digression (very Petrarchan, though placed in his director's mouth) on the comparative merits of Greek and Latin eloquence. Seneca is cited as a champion of Greek, Cicero of Latin, as a superior linguistic medium<sup>2</sup>; Augustine impartially condemns both languages for their paucity of words. He proceeds to argue *a fortiori* that if two such famous languages are proved to be inadequate, what can be hoped for from others? With such poverty in the province of which Petrarch is but a tiny atom,<sup>3</sup> his aim is shown to be unattainable.

He is then reproached for pride in his physical health and strength, and in the comeliness of his appearance. Should he not remember that he may be laid low in a moment by the sting of an insect or a light draught of air, and take warning that the gift of beauty, as in the fable of Narcissus, is but fleeting? The poet here interrupts his monitor by protesting that most of these notions had never entered his head. He asserts that he has always been conscious of his own littleness; and if he has ever thought anything of himself, it was merely by comparison with other men. He has admitted in one of his letters<sup>4</sup> that the most brilliant gifts are useless to a mind diseased; and as to the charge of vanity about his personal comeliness, it can only make him smile. True, he was a bit of a dandy in his youth, but now he

<sup>1</sup> B. ed. p. 384.

<sup>2</sup> P. quotes here "Seneca's *Declamations*" (Lib. I.), by which he means the *Controversiæ* of Seneca the elder (*P. et L'Hum.* ii. p. 117), whom he does not distinguish from his son, the philosopher. The passage of Cicero is in the *De bonis et malis* (i. 3). P. says that while many "in our camp" concede the supremacy of Greek, some cite "the illustrious Greek philosopher," Plutarch, as yielding the palm to Latin. I have failed to find his authority for this; no work of Plutarch was accessible to him.

<sup>3</sup> I am not so sure as Carlini-Minguzzi (p. 86) that by "provincia" P. here means Tuscany; it is just as likely that he means Provence. There is clearly a veiled allusion to his works in another language than Latin.

<sup>4</sup> *Ep. Metr.* I. vii.



agrees with the Emperor Domitian <sup>1</sup> that personal beauty is the most transient of gifts. The saint replies that he could easily refute these statements ; but he leaves them to his conscience and now simply bids him continue to avoid what he protests he has always avoided. What would he think of a man shut up in a loathsome dungeon, who instead of welcoming his deliverer, should engross himself in painting and adorning its walls ? Well, the body is such a prison, and Petrarch has shown that he loves it and chains himself to it. While protesting his freedom from pride, he has just given proof of his arrogance by depreciating others—a far worse fault than mere self-exaltation.

The poet maintains that experience has given him small esteem both for himself and the majority of men ; he hopes he is not to be accused of envy. Augustine thinks that he has escaped this sin, but charges him with an undue desire for temporal things. Petrarch, however, doubts whether there is a man in the world more free from this fault than he. The saint replies with the saying of Terence that “ flattery makes friends and candour foes ” <sup>2</sup> ; he is guilty of both avarice and ambition. When he protests that he is forced against his will to mingle some care for household matters with his higher studies, Augustine allows that his nature inclines him to the simple life ; but he has been content to follow the world’s standard and imagine that there is something lacking. The saint draws an attractive picture of his former happy life at Vacluse, and says that it is cupidity which has led him to forsake this and plunge into the whirlpool of city life.<sup>3</sup> In his youth he gave promise of becoming a great man ; but now he has changed his habits and thinks only of piling up provision for days that he may never see. Petrarch then asks impatiently if he is to pay court to poverty ; he will bear it if it comes, but he would not choose it. He gets the answer that man should always aim at “ the golden mean ” ; to say that bread and water are enough would be an absurd extreme. He already has sufficient for his proper wants ; the desire for more merely increases his anxieties and stunts his nobler thoughts. Petrarch remarks that the poet’s fable of the

<sup>1</sup> Suetonius, *Dom.* xviii. For the portraits of P. cf. Excursus IV. (Vol. I.).

<sup>2</sup> Terence, *Andria*, Act I., sc. i. 41.

<sup>3</sup> This is surely proof that for the time P. had definitely abandoned his “ rustication.”

twin summits of Parnassus—the one dedicated to Apollo, the god of mind, the other to Bacchus, the god of earthly enjoyments—has some foundation of good sense. Although the plurality of gods is absurd, it does not seem unreasonable to ask both gifts from the One God, from whom all good things come. The saint grants this, but maintains that Petrarch only gives to higher things the time that he can spare from avarice. When the poet explains that his aim is neither to want nor to abound, neither to command nor to obey, he is reminded that if he is to want nothing, he must become God ; man is of all creatures the one that has most wants. In proof of this fact a moving picture is drawn of man's helplessness in infancy and of his dependence upon others ; yet it is such a worm of earth that dares to dream of riches and power. " Who spoke," asks Petrarch, " either of riches or of power ? " The saint retorts that he implied both, for what can be greater riches than to want nothing, what greater power than to be independent of others ? No, he must learn both to want and to abound, both to command and to obey. The greatest kings and captains are helpless without the common soldier, who wins them their renown. Man is only really free when he conforms to the rule of Virtue, when he refuses to let earthly cares distract him from higher things. The poet assents, but would like to hear more on the charge of ambition. Surely his leaving the world and its affairs for the country-side was some proof that he held its honours cheap. He gets the ironical rejoinder that men only despise these things when they despair of getting them. He knew that he had not the arts needed for success in public life—as dissimulation, flattery of the great and the patient endurance of indignities. But he cannot impose on his confessor by pretending false motives for his retirement. He had left the beaten track towards earthly honours only in order to reach them by a by-path ; his real aim was all the while the same—the attainment of glory for himself.

This home-thrust leads Petrarch suddenly to change the subject—really, perhaps, because he was encroaching on the topics of the next dialogue. Augustine, in continuing the list of vices, acquits him of gluttony on account of the frugality of his life in solitude ; and passes over anger because—though he is sometimes carried away by it—his " naturally sweet temper " makes him placable. The poet says parenthetically that reflection on the shortness of life has helped him to avoid this passion. But

there is a keener shaft in the saint's armoury, from which he cannot escape. He is plainly asked whether he has been scorched by the flames of lust, and has to confess that he would sooner have been "an insensible stone" than be tormented by such temptation. He is reminded of Plato's saying<sup>1</sup> that no other passion is so great a foe to the contemplation of Divine things. Petrarch recognizes the helping hand of God, whenever he has risen from a fall, but now he feels bitterly the shame of another fall. The saint replies, with more tenderness than usual, that that is why he has come to his aid; but he can do nothing unless God give the penitent the grace of chastity.<sup>2</sup> In answer to the assurance that he has often earnestly prayed for it, Augustine attributes his failure to the absence of whole-hearted desire; the prayer—like his own recorded in the *Confessions*<sup>3</sup>—had really wished for the postponement of the gift till the passions of youth were over. The poet denies the last statement, but promises that his prayers shall be more ardent and persevering. He has learnt from a wonderful allegory of Virgil<sup>4</sup> that this vice takes away the vision of things Divine. His confessor then warns him that he must return to this subject in the next conversation; he has reserved to the last the probing of his deepest wounds, so that they may remain graven upon his memory.

It is worth notice how throughout this dialogue, and especially on the last point, Petrarch's allusions are almost exclusively to classical authors, and very rarely to Scripture. He must have been aware that no heathen author—not even Plato or Aristotle—took the loftier view of personal chastity which Christianity enjoins, and which reaches its extreme in the monastic ideal. One would expect at least Augustine to strengthen his argument by St. Paul's exhortations in the Epistle to the Romans and to insist on the new and honourable place

<sup>1</sup> Possibly in the *Phædo* (§§ 64, 65 or 83). This is the passage where P. refers to his readings in Plato with Barlaam, who may have translated the *Phædo* to him; or he may have found the saying in Cicero or some later writers.

<sup>2</sup> There is probably a reference here to *Wisdom* viii. 21: "When I perceived that I could not otherwise obtain continence, unless God gave her to me."

<sup>3</sup> Lib. VIII. (cap. vii.) 17.

<sup>4</sup> He cites two passages in the *Æneid* (II. 361–369, and 622, 623), where Æneas is represented as not perceiving the wrath of Heaven as long as "Venus" is his companion, but the truth dawns upon him when she disappears.



which the Apostle assigns to the body. But the exclusion of this line of treatment seems deliberate. The book might almost be styled "The Confessions of a Christian sinner, illustrated and corrected from heathen ethics." Yet a closer examination of this section will reveal the Christian division of the sources of temptation into those of the devil, the world, and the flesh. First we have pride—the sin by which the tempter fell; then avarice and ambition, the special snares of the world; and lastly, gluttony<sup>1</sup> and impurity, the grosser sins of the flesh. But Petrarch—like some modern revivalists—is more interested in depicting his own subjective struggles than in setting forth the Christian ideal. It is a very natural trait that while he begins by protesting his freedom from the two first forms of sin, he at once admits the last, and shows more contrition here than anywhere else in the book. On this point his asceticism might have full play, for his humanism was not touched. Yet though his admissions are quite general, they plainly refer to definite sensual acts<sup>2</sup>; there is no hint of the sinfulness of his passion for "Laura," on which his director has not yet enlightened him.

In the discussion on pride we see Petrarch, as in the *Letter to Posterity*, remaining obstinately blind to his "besetting fault" of self-complacent vanity. He says that he is always conscious of his own littleness; yet he betrays throughout the sense of his superiority to other men. In speaking of eloquence he rather limits its range than denies its power; but there is a hint (of course in St. Augustine's mouth) that the writer himself recognized the gaudy tinsel of it. That he was vain of his own good looks he stoutly denies, but in a way which suggests that there was some ground for such vanity. The saint's reproof of his cupidity or avarice is more surprising—especially the distinct statement that his abandonment of Vacluse for city-life was due to this fault. Petrarch defends himself, of course, but in a half-hearted way—implying, perhaps, that the Cardinal had tempted him by a higher salary to resume his old post in his household. The

<sup>1</sup> The passing reference to anger, however, occurs in the wrong division.

<sup>2</sup> As those resulting in the birth of his children, whom he never expressly mentions as such (cf. the allusion to Francesca in his Will, Chap. XL., below). For P.'s two falls alluded to just above, see Chap. XIII. p. 54; also p. 242 and n. 7 in this chapter.

poet's life affords ample proof that he did not value money for money's sake; and the accusation of some of his critics<sup>1</sup> that he was a prebend-hunter has very little basis in fact. His self-revelation, whether from the pricks of conscience or from vanity, is so intimate that his censors often behave to him like myrmidons of the Inquisition. The Italian commentator on this work<sup>2</sup> says truly that many great men would sink in the world's opinion if we knew as much of them as we do of Petrarch; and Burckhardt roundly declares<sup>3</sup> that some critics of the poet's vanity would hardly have shown as much kindness and frankness in his place.

St. Augustine begins the last section of the dialogue by suddenly accusing him of "that deadly soul-plague which the moderns call "accidia"<sup>4</sup> and the ancients "ægritudo."<sup>5</sup> This was a kind of sullenness or melancholy, which might be styled "moral pessimism." Petrarch admits the charge and describes the symptoms—a constant gloom almost amounting to despair, which envelops him for days at a time, so that he endures the tortures of death and hell, and even feels a morbid satisfaction in contemplating his extreme misery. The saint tenderly inquires the immediate cause—Is it some misfortune or physical trouble? He is assured that it is not any one of these taken separately; the poet can bear a few strokes of fortune, but this is an accumulation of distresses. He is like a besieged fortress, whose towers are falling and its roofs on fire, while armed foes beset every outlet and threaten him with ruin. Augustine remarks that his account is rather confused, but he evidently thinks himself "in a bad way," and he asks why he should think

<sup>1</sup> As Voigt, I. p. 97. Cf. *Sen.* XIII. 12, 13 (about 1371, to F. Bruni), in which he solicits help from Gregory XI., but only after receiving a hint that the Pope wished to provide for him. C. Segré (pp. 109–114) describes P. as a weak, though amiable, spendthrift; but he unfairly confounds the callow days of his youth with his manhood.

<sup>2</sup> Signora Carlini-Minguzzi, p. 100.

<sup>3</sup> *Renaissance in Italy* (Eng. trans), I. 199 n.

<sup>4</sup> For a learned history of the word cf. H. Cochin, *Le Frère de P.* (Appendix, pp. 205–221). It is from the Greek ἀκηδία (or ἀκηδεια) which originally meant "indifference" (the "don't care" temper, Lat. "incuria"). M. Cochin conjectures that its Latin form may have arisen through false derivations from "acidus" or "accido" (p. 212). Its appearance in Cassian as early as the fifth century A.D. renders this hypothesis doubtful, as also his view that its adoption into Latin was due to the use in the Vulgate of the cognate verb "acedior."

<sup>5</sup> Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* III. 10.

so. Petrarch replies, "Not for any one reason, but for myriads." Being then compared to people who on the slightest offence rake up every old grievance, he maintains that no old wound is in question; his sufferings are all fresh, and whether they are called "accidia" or "ægritudo" makes no difference to their reality. The saint says the evil is clearly so deep that it must be torn up by the roots; and on his again asking patiently the chief cause of offence, he is informed that it is everything seen, heard or felt, whether in the sufferer himself or in others. He then gently insists that it is nothing external at all, but merely the "black melancholy" itself. Is the poet sure that he is as much displeased with himself as he says? Petrarch evidently resents the question, but avoids a direct answer; and on being further pressed, admits that he does not know the cause of his misery. Augustine says he will hazard a guess; it is because he is annoyed with "Fortune." The poet says he has good reason; she has been not only unkind, but proud, unjust, cruel.

"Then 'The Grumbler,'<sup>1</sup>" retorts the saint in raillery, "is not found only in the 'comic poet'; there are 'myriads' of them! You have become one of the crowd; I wish your company were more select." He then asks whether Petrarch has ever suffered hunger, thirst, or cold through poverty? The poet says "No," but this comparison with others brings no relief; he is as sorry for the troubles of others as for his own. Augustine replies that the greater troubles of others ought to teach us not to complain of our own. Everybody cannot have the first places; and Petrarch's own observation will tell him that these are not exempt from annoyance. As for his worldly position, he knows that he has left many far behind him in the race. The poet protests that he has always set a modest goal to his desires; he solemnly appeals to "Truth" to bear witness that he has never aspired to a high place, but merely wished for a "middle position." His complaint is that even these moderate aspirations are continually baulked by circumstance. The saint insinuates that his "middle position" is sufficiently high and might be an object of envy to many. Petrarch dissents, but while ready to agree that he is not

<sup>1</sup> The allusion is to an anonymous extant play (*Querolus*), which was long attributed to Plautus, but is now placed in the fourth century A.D. It appears from this single allusion that P. had read it; and though he does not actually ascribe it to Plautus, the expression "Comicus poeta" points in that direction.



badly placed, he complains of his dependence upon others,<sup>1</sup> which he finds intolerably irksome. He is then asked by what right he expects a life free from care. Subservience may be annoying, but how few have been able to live a life all their own ! Even Cæsar, when he had attained the pinnacle of power and was using it for others' benefit, was basely struck down by those for whom he toiled. The illustration, so completely in the poet's usual vein, brings him to his senses, and he vows that he will never again complain of his condition.

The Christian, perhaps, might think that the example of One, Who had toiled and suffered for all men and was even more basely used in return, would be far more apposite and convincing. But the saint is, as usual, preoccupied with Petrarch's malady, and asks if his bodily health is the cause of his gloom. The poet says that his body is more obedient than his soul, but it is a continual burden. The worst evil is the cruelty of "Fortune," who in a single day deprived him of his hopes, his wealth, his family and home.<sup>2</sup> "I see your eyes brimming over," remarks the saint, "and so I pass on." Just now Petrarch is hardly fit to bear instruction ; but he should remember the fall of great cities, and empires, and all the tragedies he has read, and then ask himself why his own "little hut" should escape.

The poet then details the little vexations of his town-life—the noise of crowds, the barking of dogs, the butting of foul swine, the rumble of carriages and the contrast between flaunting wealth and abject beggary in this city, which is "the constricted sewer of all lands." "Now," he tells himself in mockery, "go and ply your noble thoughts in this hell, and as Horace says,<sup>3</sup> 'weave a tuneful poem'." Augustine, after some banter about his fondness for the woods,<sup>4</sup> suggests that such impatience is merely the tumult of the senses and the imagination. Greater men than he have made the same complaint, and flight is always open ; if

<sup>1</sup> This is an evident allusion to his position in the Cardinal's employ.

<sup>2</sup> He refers here to his father's exile (or possibly his death) as the cause of all his misfortunes—not (as Koerting strangely thinks, p. 637, n.) to the pillage of his Vacluse cottage in 1353. I doubt if even the word "tuguriolum" (little hut) just below is not metaphorical ; but it may have been added after 1353 in reference to that event.

<sup>3</sup> "Versus tecum compone sonoros." (Horace writes "meditare.") *Epist.* II. ii. 76.

<sup>4</sup> He quotes a line of P.'s *Ep. Metr.* II. iii, to Cardinal d'Alby ("Silva placet Musis, urbs est inimica poetis," l. 43). This suggests for that letter the date of 1342 (or possibly 1343). See Chap. XII. p. 41.

he will listen to reason, these sounds will not disturb his soul any more than the murmur of a waterfall. Let him read Seneca and Cicero,<sup>1</sup> and not merely read, but take notes and commit their best maxims to memory. The passions seize upon us suddenly and hurry us off headlong, if we have not the remedy at hand. Petrarch assents and quotes the "cave of the winds" and Æolus in Virgil<sup>2</sup> as an allegory of such passions and the means of stilling them. Augustine is not sure that Virgil is thinking of more than a storm at sea, but the comparison is ingenious. Let the poet contrast the lives of many others with his own and think with what gifts he has been endowed as a consolation, and then he will not allow petty annoyances to plunge his soul in gloom. Then, like a man beholding a shipwreck from the shore, he will look with compassion on the miseries of others and, instead of complaining, will be thankful for his own safety. The poet, though wincing at the remark that he could always flee from the town, owns himself beaten by the arguments adduced. He will strive after inward calm "if only there be no such being as 'Fortune'"—a point on which Homer and Virgil disagree<sup>3</sup>; on this, however, he means to write some day.<sup>4</sup> The saint then invites him to a third conversation, to which Petrarch eagerly agrees, since, as a believer in the Trinity, he holds the number three—as indeed did the ancients<sup>5</sup>—in special honour.

The "deadly soul-plague" treated in this section is as old as human nature; but it did not receive its mediæval name ("accidia"), nor were its symptoms adequately described, till the appearance of monastic institutions. Bishop Francis Paget has given us the history rather of the word than of the disease

<sup>1</sup> He expressly mentions Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* III. (on "ægritudo"), with Seneca's 56th letter to Lucilius and the same author's *De Tranquillitate animi*. The Master of the Temple (p. 99) makes a serious slip in translating as if the latter work were P.'s own.

<sup>2</sup> *Æn.* I. 52-67 (see above, Chap. XIV. p. 145). Æolus is supposed to represent "Reason."

<sup>3</sup> P. notes that Homer does not mention Fortune (τύχη) throughout his poems, while Virgil calls her "omnipotent" (*Æn.* VIII. 334). He gets this from Macrobius (*Saturnalia*, V. xvi. 8) but, needless to say, without specifying his authority.

<sup>4</sup> See Chap. XXXI. on "The Remedies of Both Kinds of Fortune"—written at Milan 1357-1360.

<sup>5</sup> He alludes to the three Graces and quotes Virgil (*Ecl.* VIII. 75) as saying that the gods delight in this number. It is curious that Pythagoras regarded the "Triad" as representing the Deity (Baring-Gould, *Myths of the Middle Ages*, p. 651).

in a learned essay,<sup>1</sup> which he wrote to satisfy the interest excited by his fine sermon in Oxford on the evil and its remedy. In the former he rightly maintains that the malady is not peculiar to the cloister ; but his own witnesses prove that its Latin name arose from its prevalence among monks of imperfect vocation.<sup>2</sup> In the fifth century Cassian, the zealous promoter of Gallic monachism, speaks of it as "the afternoon complaint" ("the sickness that destroyeth in the noonday" Ps. xci, 6), which overwhelmed hermits and other "religious" after the strain of the morning's devotions. Plainly it is the besetting temptation of the "solitary" ; yet it is not peculiar to that mode of life. It is also one of the snares of the "sanguine" temperament. It marks the reaction from the flow of animal spirits maintained, yet often only assumed, in company. Who has not witnessed his most cheerful friends subject to "moods" of unaccountable gloom, in which all their jovial gifts seem to be in abeyance ? These "moods" are perhaps as transient as the liveliness with which they alternate ; yet to the "patients" they are accompanied by very real, even if causeless, suffering. I conceive that it was these moods which constituted Petrarch's "accidie" ; and in his case they seem to have been aggravated by the intensity of his feelings and by his love of solitude. He refused to recognize his own malady in the "ægritudo animi" of Cicero and in the "tædium et displicentia sui" of Seneca.<sup>3</sup> These were exactly what is styled by the French "ennui" and by the fevered spirits of the early nineteenth century "maladie du siècle."<sup>4</sup>

But where did Petrarch get the name "accidia," which does not occur in the Latin classics or in the Vulgate, though in the Septuagint, in Lucian, and in some of the Greek Fathers is found (in the same sense) the Greek word from which it is derived ? It is a difficult question ; for he can hardly have read in 1343—if ever—the monastic work of Cassian,<sup>5</sup> or the *Summa* of St.

<sup>1</sup> *The Spirit of Discipline* (6th ed. 1894), 1-50.

<sup>2</sup> In speaking of "accidie" Lecky (*European Morals*, cr. 8vo. ed. ii. 52) says that most of the recorded instances of mediæval suicide were those of monks ; but he adds that "monasteries, by providing a refuge for the disappointed and broken-hearted, have prevented more suicides than they have caused."

<sup>3</sup> In the *De Tranquillitate Animi* (see above, p. 240 and n. 3).

<sup>4</sup> M. Cochin (p. 206, n.) instances the *Joseph Delorme* and *Enfant du Siècle* of A. de Musset, and the Preface to Victor Hugo's *Cromwell*.

<sup>5</sup> *De Cænobiorum Institutis*, of which Lib. X. is wholly devoted to it.



Thomas Aquinas, in which the subject is fully discussed.<sup>1</sup> If he had done so, his treatment of it in the *Secret* would assuredly have been different. The word is indeed used in modern Italian in the sense of "laziness" or "sloth"; but that is emphatically not the sense in which Petrarch employs it, either here or in another passage where he uses the cognate adjective.<sup>2</sup> In the Italian sense the adjective appears in the famous passage in the seventh Canto of the *Inferno*, in which Dante places the "tristi," together with the Wrathful, in the pestilential marsh of the Fifth Circle, where they utter this refrain from the slime:

"Sullen we were<sup>3</sup>  
In the sweet air which by the sun is gladdened  
Bearing within ourselves the sluggish ('accidioso') reek,  
Now we are sullen in the sable mire."

Perhaps a confused recollection of this passage may have led Petrarch to fancy that the "tristi" are called "accidiosi"; for the sin for which they are punished here is sullenness. Anyhow the dominant note in Petrarch's "accidie" is not sloth, but the gloom of hopeless discontent. If I mistake not, there is another allusion to the same Canto at the end of the Dialogue, where our poet shows an inclination to share Dante's belief<sup>4</sup> in the existence of a kind of subordinate minister called "Fortune." His discontent is partly due to the spite which he thinks this "demi-goddess" displays against himself; and he will accept the saint's counsel, if only he can feel that she is a myth.

The ancients regarded the misery afterwards called "accidie" as a mental plague or disease rather than as a vice. Its distinctive portraiture as a sin belongs to Christian ethics; and in the secondary sense of "sloth" it denoted a sin peculiarly "clerical."<sup>5</sup> In the *Summa* of Aquinas, however, whom Dante closely follows, it is the opposite of "Charity" in the sense of "the love of God," just as envy is opposed to "the love of our

<sup>1</sup> *Summa Theologiæ*, II. ii. 28, 35, 36.

<sup>2</sup> *Ot. Rel.* (B. ed.) p. 336, where he describes the "accidiosi" as "tristes." In his string of Biblical texts against each sin he cites Ecclesiasticus xxx. 21-25 as a corrective for this fault. He had spoken just before of the "slothful" (pigri), for whom he cites Prov. vi. 6-11.

<sup>3</sup> *Inf.* VII. 121-123 (Longfellow's translation).

<sup>4</sup> *Inf.* VII. 67-96. Though P. did not then possess a copy of the *Commedia*, he may have been able to borrow one at Avignon.

<sup>5</sup> Such is its use in mediæval French. See Cochin (*op. cit.*), p. 216.

neighbour." The great Schoolman distinguishes between a deadly and a venial kind of accidie—the latter being rather a "defect" than a "refusal" of Love. It is here that the secondary sense of "sloth" comes in; and in conformity with this Dante<sup>1</sup> places those who are slothful from this cause in Purgatory rather than in Hell. In the "Persone's Tale,"<sup>2</sup> where Chaucer describes this "roten sinne," these two elements are combined; but the vices that accompany it<sup>3</sup> are depicted as more akin to the second than to the first. In Petrarch's description we find little of sloth and much of gloom and bitterness; and yet—like the ancients whom he chiefly studied—he considers it more as a malady than as a vice. Hence the remedies recommended by the saint are even less distinctively Christian than is usual in the *Secret*. The victim is indeed bidden to contrast himself with others whose troubles are more real; but he is never shown how widely his ill-humour makes him depart from the "theological virtues" of Faith, Hope, and Charity. Augustine suggests that he should mark or commit to memory helpful and cheerful maxims of the wise; but he says nothing of the value of common, trivial work—especially work for others—to dispel the fumes of gloomy dejection. Above all, as already hinted, he fails altogether to arouse the sufferer's shame and thankfulness by pointing to the example of the Cross. Petrarch's whole treatment of the subject is secular rather than religious; it is a mark of the transition stage between compunction and conversion, in which this book was written.

### *Dialogue III.*

Augustine begins the third conversation by deprecating a spirit of contradiction, and Petrarch readily promises compliance. He is warned that he is fettered by two strong chains, which he fancies to be of gold and considers not fetters, but treasures. Men say that the only way to break a diamond is to plunge it in the

<sup>1</sup> *Purg.* XVII. 85-139 and XVIII. Here, however, Dante does not employ the word "accidia," though sloth is the sin, which is the defect of Love.

<sup>2</sup> Chaucer, "The Persone's Tale," *Canterbury Tales* (Aldine edition), III. 323-330.

<sup>3</sup> They are on the one side "wanhope" (despair), "recklessness" and "worldly sorrow" (2 Cor. vii. 10); on the other "sloth," "sompnolence," "thurrok" (slackness), "lachesse," "coldness" and "undevotion."

blood of a goat, and this blood has also a marvellous power of breaking the hardest heart.<sup>1</sup> A prisoner can only be freed from these hard chains by his own willing consent. Petrarch simulates extreme surprise ; and on hearing that the chains are Love and Glory, speaks of them as the noblest passions—like sunlight to his soul.

Taking Love first, he maintains that that form of it which sways his heart is the most blessed of gifts, and if the saint holds a contrary opinion, they must agree to differ. For himself he says that if he errs on this point—like Cicero, he "errs willingly, and will not part with his error while life lasts."<sup>2</sup> He is reminded that Cicero is there speaking of belief in immortality, which would be wholesome for men, even if false ; on the other hand persistence in this error will destroy all his grasp of truth. Petrarch roundly tells his confessor that he is wasting his time ; it is of no use to prescribe remedies to a man who knows he is not ill. Is the saint really aware of the matter he has chosen to treat ? Augustine says Yes, it is about a mortal woman, in the praises of whom he has wasted sixteen long years of life. For exactly that length of time Italy was subject to the furious wooing of Hannibal ; yet the invader was at last forced to retreat. But who can free Petrarch from the toils if he exults in his slavery ? A day must come when the eyes of his beloved must close in death ; he will then blush to remember that all his affections have been fixed upon a perishing form. The poet spurns the very idea ; he entered this world before her, and he will leave it sooner. He is then warned that his lady's health has been undermined by sickness and the bearing of children, and that the order of death seldom follows the order of birth. In reply he protests that he, too, has felt the ravages of time, but he prays continually that his "hour" may come before hers. "But what," persists the saint, "would you say, if she were actually dead ?" Petrarch answers that he should comfort himself with what is past ; he should say,

<sup>1</sup> This fable is first found in Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* XXXVII. iv. 15) and afterwards in Solinus. The fathers use it as an illustration of the blood of Christ, the "goat of the Atonement," which breaks the hard heart of men. It is curious that though Augustine here hints at this metaphor, he does not develop it ; and this is in exact conformity with the observation in the last paragraph. Sir Thomas Browne (*Vulgar Errors*, Book II. Chap. v.) mentions the fable only to reject it.

<sup>2</sup> *De Senectute*, c. 23.



with Lælius in Cicero,<sup>1</sup> "it is her virtue which I loved, and that is not dead."

Augustine says he retires into the very citadel of Error, and it is hard to dislodge him; but let him rave as he may about "Laura's" virtues, they are no excuse for his own fault. The poet fully avails himself of the ironic permission; and while urging that no slanderer could ever say a word against her, says he owes everything to her, for love has wrought in him a likeness to his beloved. All such talk, says his mentor, is mere delusion; this fatal passion has ruined him, because it has inverted the true order of the soul's affections. He has declared that the love of "Laura" has made him love God; whereas in truth the creature should only be dear to us from our higher love for the Creator. His assertion that he has loved her body less than her soul is false; would he have loved either if her form had been less fair? Petrarch is forced to answer No; yet he asserts that if he could have seen her soul, he would have loved it, however mean its dwelling-place. The saint rejoins that if he can only love what is visible, it is her body that has attracted him all the time. He then skilfully extorts the admission that the beginning of Petrarch's love and his deviation from right occurred at the same time, and finally he induces him to confess that he had tried to make "Laura" follow him in wrong. His protestation that his love has now changed its character makes no difference; he fails to see that in absolving her he condemns himself. Unsatisfied love of temporal things is the most violent of the passions; and when men throw a veil over it and call it "divine," they only desecrate the name of God. Let the poet recall the miseries into which it has plunged him, the morbid pleasure he took in his own sighs and tears, his melancholy avoidance of his fellow-men, his habit of making his life wholly dependent upon her—and he must admit that these are no signs of health or sanity. Then his crass folly in carrying about her picture, in striving, at the cost of huge toil, to win the "laurel" of poetry merely because it recalled her name—all this affords the clearest evidence of a distempered mind. It is of no use to pretend that he was devoted to such studies even before he became a lover; the motive that carried him over all obstacles was a longing to entwine her name

<sup>1</sup> *De Amicitia*, c. 27. The passage refers to Scipio Africanus the younger.

with his. These are no symptoms of a moderate passion ; his love has made him deaf to the voice of reason and forgetful of God and of his own future.

Now at length Petrarch owns himself defeated ; the words of the saint are taken from " the very book of experience." What can he do ? Is there nothing for him but despair ? Augustine warns him sternly not to lose hope, and proceeds to consider possible remedies. He first tentatively suggests a new object of love, but admits the danger of replacing " a nobler passion, if one may call it so," by one altogether lower and less worthy. When the poet solemnly assures him that he can never love another, he recommends change of scene, " flight from the beloved shore." <sup>1</sup> Petrarch says that he has often tried it and has found his retirement to the country and his wider travels alike fruitless ; he is like the Cretan deer in Virgil,<sup>2</sup> who carries the dart in its wounded side. He is told that he has himself given the reason for his failure ; he has carried his wound about with him. He must first " prepare his soul " by resolutely breaking the chain of his passion and then flee with no hope or intention of returning. The poet remarks that the maladies of the soul are harder to cure than those of the body, but he is here flatly contradicted ; everything depends on the patient himself putting no obstacles in the way. Petrarch cannot see why the soul still needs absence when it is cured, unless indeed there is danger of a relapse. He is assured that that is just the point, and that his own experience is enough to demonstrate it. He must never look back, as Orpheus did, or he will lose the peace that he has striven to win. Petrarch accepts the counsel, but does not know whither to go. The saint replies that he has a large choice ; but Italy, which he has praised in his poetry,<sup>3</sup> would be best for him. He need not confine himself to one corner of it, but should go wherever he feels inclined. Above all, he must avoid solitude, until his cure is complete. He has himself complained " in a fine poem " of the snares that his loneliness set for him ; and the saint says he has wondered why the " Muses," whom the poet boasts of

<sup>1</sup> The allusion is to Virg. *Æn.* III. 44 (" Heu ! fuge crudeles terras, fuge litus avarum "), but the saint takes the liberty of changing the adjectives to " dilectas " and " amatum."

<sup>2</sup> *Æn.* IV. 69-73.

<sup>3</sup> The allusion is to *Ep. Metr.* III. xxv. (to Ildebrandino, Bishop of Padua) which was probably written after 1345. The passage must therefore have been added in revising this book.

attracting,<sup>1</sup> did not long ago abandon such a nest of troubles. He accounts for it by the saying of Aristotle that "all great genius has a dash of madness in it."<sup>2</sup>

Petrarch is frankly delighted with this praise, and asks if he can recommend any other remedy. The saint quotes Seneca<sup>3</sup> to prove that it is a mistake to try too many remedies at once; he must persevere with the remedy of flight, until it is shown to be of no avail. But he should keep in mind the three things which Cicero represents<sup>4</sup> as hostile to Love—Satiety, Shame, and Reflection. Of the first it is useless to speak, because the poet knows it is impossible for him; and even if it were not, he would vow that he could never feel it. But Shame is the curb employed by Reason to hold passion in leash. When Petrarch replies that he knows well the conflict between Love and Shame, he is suddenly asked whether he has looked in the glass lately? Has he not seen plain signs of wrinkles and grey hairs? And have these tokens of bodily change produced any change in his soul? The poet admits an impression, but not exactly a change. He then goes off at a tangent to enumerate instances in the classics of similar personal infirmities. The saint smiles at this wealth of illustration, but says there is no harm in it, so long as it does not foster self-deception. Man's supreme folly is to allow old age to surprise him in the act of pursuing shadows. There are people who never grow up; you may find some even at ninety fondling toys and quarrelling about trifles. As Seneca says, "Infancy passes, but childishness remains."<sup>5</sup> Then turning sternly upon the poet, the confessor bids him cease to be "the butt" of the public. He has a solid reputation,<sup>6</sup> which it is no light matter to sustain; then let him put away childish things; let his mirror remind him, as the same philosopher recommends,<sup>7</sup> that it is time to consider his latter end. Petrarch says it is a wise warning and he repents of not having followed it; he has at least this comfort

<sup>1</sup> The "fine poem" is *Ep. Metr.* I. vii., and the reference here is to the second part of it (translated above, pp. 67, 68).

<sup>2</sup> P. gets this from Seneca, *De Tranquillitate Animi*, c. xv.

<sup>3</sup> Seneca, *Ep.* II. to Lucilius.

<sup>4</sup> *Tusc. Disp.* IV. 35.

<sup>5</sup> Seneca, *Ep.* I. 4.

<sup>6</sup> P. makes the saint refer here to the line of which he is so proud; he uses it both in the *Africa* and in *Ep. Metr.*: "Magnus enim labor est magnæ custodia famæ." See above, p. 149, n. 2.

<sup>7</sup> *Nat. Quæst.* i. 17.



that "Laura" too is growing old. The saint asks severely whether it is more decent to be enamoured of an old woman than of a young one<sup>1</sup>; in fact it is more unbecoming, because the reason for it is less.

He then urges him to make even more use of Reflection than of Shame. Let him think how noble a thing is the soul, and how vile the body; how uncertain is the hour of death, and yet at all times imminent; how injurious this "passion" has been alike to his career and to his fortune. Let him remember how constantly "Laura" has disdained and neglected him; and if for one moment she seemed kinder, it was but as the passing of a breath. Let him think of all the harm she had done to his life (in spite of his solicitude for her good name), and of the neglect which nobler tasks have suffered at his hands through the power of this infatuation. Finally, let him reflect how false and fleeting is this alluring charm of woman's beauty, and resolutely turn away from all the images of the past; let him pray for strength and pity from above, which will assuredly not be denied to him. Petrarch promises compliance, and says that he already feels a blessed release from a part, if not from all, of his distress.

There is the less need to comment on this section of the dialogue because we have already done so in two previous chapters.<sup>2</sup> The observation was made long ago,<sup>3</sup> and is still true, that no biographer of Petrarch has made sufficient use of it. It furnishes irrefragable proof both of the intense reality of his passion and of its hopelessness. It enables us to distinguish the three successive phases of his love, which in the *Canzoniere* are inextricably interfused. But the saint, who represents Petrarch's conscience, will not admit that any one phase is less reprehensible than the preceding. He refuses to listen to the argument that the affection has been purified by time or that it has ever been anything but a disaster. It is true that once he inconsistently calls it "a nobler passion"; but this is merely the human lover in Petrarch peeping out for a moment behind the ascetic. Yet he does not

<sup>1</sup> The "adolescentula" here is not, as Geiger supposes (see Part IV. § i. p. 217, of his *Petrarcha*, Leipzig, 1574), an allusion to "Laura." The point of the passage is that she is the "old woman" (*anus*) not the young one.

<sup>2</sup> Chaps. VII. and VIII. The above analysis is purposely less complete in order to avoid unnecessary repetition.

<sup>3</sup> Mézières (*Pétrarque*), p. 50.

condemn all human love ; he evidently thinks that the poet might exchange his misplaced passion for one more innocent. We cannot imagine the real Augustine making such a concession ; nor can we fancy his listening complacently to the almost exclusive citation of pagan writers and freely adding to it from his own store. Towards the close the contest seems to lie between all forms of earthly love and the Christian ideal. But Augustine does not always keep the discussion upon this high plane ; he even seems infected at times with the secular tone of his penitent. This is natural in the circumstances of the composition ; if it lessens the dramatic effect of the dialogue, it is a strong witness to its sincerity.

The saint begins the last section by telling Petrarch that he is too eager for the praise of men and the glory of an undying name. He freely admits the charge, and also his fear that this desire may hinder his attainment of the true immortality. Augustine quotes Cicero <sup>1</sup> to prove that glory is merely reputation among men, and he asks how it is that the poet, who never conceals his contempt for " the common herd," should yet be so eager for their applause. He spends his days and nights in toil, merely in order to tickle with flowers of poetry or gems of history the ears of those whom he despises. Petrarch, with some inconsequence, begs to observe that from his youth he has always shunned the " Florilegia," or elegant extracts from other men's writings. He is reminded that that is not the gravamen of the charge. Instead of attending to ordinary duties and the care of his soul, he has undertaken two vast works—the *De Viris Illustribus* or series of Roman biographies, and his poem of *Africa*—merely in order to satisfy his insatiate thirst for glory. Death will perhaps carry him off before either of them is finished, and thus his goal will be unattained. The poet admits he was so tortured by this fear that during an illness he nearly burnt the *Africa*, as Virgil threatened to burn the *Æneid*. Augustine replies that his recovery has merely postponed the day of reckoning, which is still to come. He still hopes to complete his work ; but if all obstacles were removed, what is it that he is aiming at ? The poet replies, " Oh, certainly, a rare and splendid work and one quite out of the common." <sup>2</sup> The saint says he will not be so impolite as to

<sup>1</sup> *Pro Marcello*, c. viii.

<sup>2</sup> Voigt (*Wiederbelebung*, I. p. 151) unfairly quotes this as P.'s matured

challenge the description ; but however excellent the work, it will be limited in scope and extent, and it withdraws his attention from more serious things.

Petrarch says he knows the old philosophic dissuasive from the love of glory—that the earth is but a point and the soul immortal, and that fame cannot fill the one or satisfy the other—but he is sure that this view is more specious than conclusive. He makes no claim to be as God, or to compass the universe ; mortal glory is enough for him. Then, says the saint, if he has no desire for the eternal and immortal, he is wholly of earth, and all hope for him is lost. Petrarch protests against both the assumption and the inference ; he has a burning love for eternal things, but he claims to use this world for what it is worth and to remember in the pursuit of fame that he and his object will alike perish. Augustine praises this sentiment, but insists upon the danger of delay to the soul's health. Let him suppose he knew he had but a year to live, how would he spend it ? The poet answers that he should be careful of his time and employ it on serious things. His confessor is not so sure that he would not spend most of it in all sorts of vanity and reserve only the last hours for the work of his salvation. That would be sheer madness, but in fact he cannot be sure of a day, or even of an hour. Both Horace <sup>1</sup> and Cicero <sup>2</sup> could remind him that he may not see the morrow. The poet says he will hope for at least a year, as according to Cicero <sup>3</sup> the oldest people do. He is warned that if he knew he had many years to live it would be madness to reserve only the last of them—which from life-weariness are good for nothing—for the care of his soul. He replies that in his view the true order is for mortal men to care first for mortal things ; it is ordained that men shall go forward from these to things eternal, for they have no chance to return from eternity to time. The saint rejoins that this dream has been the destruction of thousands—that they can have one foot on earth and the other in heaven, and enjoy the best of both worlds with impunity. Would he not feel infinite remorse, if he were suddenly cut off, to find that he had grasped at all, and lost all ?

judgment on the completed *Africa*. He describes it, as he hoped it would be, not as it was.

<sup>1</sup> *Odes* IV. vii. 17.

<sup>2</sup> *De Senectute*, cap. 19.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*



Just now he spoke contemptuously of the narrowness of the earth, with only two (perhaps only one) <sup>1</sup> of its five zones habitable, as "an old story." Should he not remember that on this narrow strip there are so many different languages and religions that the glory of his name cannot reach far? Not only is the earth small, but historical time, in which alone fame can grow, is infinitely short as compared with eternity. Petrarch has spoken eloquently in his *Africa* <sup>2</sup> of the three deaths—the deaths of the body, of memory, and of fame; did he think all this, when he wrote it, "an old story" or merely a "fable"? The poet says he is "deeply moved" by these arguments, but he wants some practical advice. Would the saint bid him abandon all his studies and ambitions, or would he recommend some middle course? Augustine says he will never advise him to relinquish ambition, but rather to put virtue before glory, to pursue the former and not the latter. Glory has been called "the shadow of virtue"; he is to aim at virtue and let glory take care of itself. We should call the man a fool who, in the blaze of noon, was always straining himself to see his shadow and point it out to others. The glory which comes from mere cleverness is not worthy of the name; and therefore Petrarch, in all his literary toil, is shooting wide of the mark; he is spending time on others which he needs for himself. The poet asks if he is to abandon his works altogether, or hastily finish them and then give his mind to higher things. The saint replies:

"I see the foot you limp upon <sup>3</sup>; you would sooner leave yourself derelict than your books. I shall discharge my duty faithfully, but whether successfully or no, rests with you. Shake off these heavy burdens of histories . . . put *Africa* aside and leave it to its inhabitants; you will add nothing to the glory of your Scipio or to your own."

At long last the poet is bidden to resume power over himself and watch the many things in earth and sky that warn him of

<sup>1</sup> The mediæval idea was that the torrid zone was uninhabitable from its heat, that the southern hemisphere was a vast ocean, and that therefore the southern temperate zone could not be inhabited.

<sup>2</sup> I have referred to this passage (*Africa*, Lib. II. 428-465)—the germ of the *Trionfi*—in the previous chapter (see above, p. 184).

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Draper's translation (p. 184), "Which foot you mean to hobble on I don't know" is a sample of his excessive freedom. There is no negative in the original.

change. Let him mark the passing seasons, the lengthening shadows of evening, the silent march of the constellations to their setting. Let him ponder the quick growth of children to manhood or the crumbling of buildings to decay or the ceaseless flow of some swift stream, and remember that he is passing away like the rest. In short, he must follow the teachings of Nature and of the Spirit—all warning him that he is travelling rapidly away from these scenes to his true home. The poet utters a fervent wish that he had heard all this before he gave himself to those studies. When the saint appeals to him not to fail in following his counsel for lack of energy or recollection, Petrarch expresses his warm thanks to him and to "Truth" for their patience with him and implores them not to forsake him. He receives the required promise "if to himself he prove but true." He knows it would be safer for him to attend only to the care of his soul, but he has not strength to give up altogether his bent for study. With (as it were) a parting head-shake, the saint says that the controversy ends where it began; "what you call want of power I call want of will." He leaves him with a prayer that God will direct his steps into the way of truth.

In the first section of this dialogue, Petrarch's conscience—personified by his confessor—seems to be victorious, though only after a hard struggle; in the second—where the ideals of humanism and asceticism come into sharp collision—the battle is undecided. He appeals to Augustine for a "via media," for a sort of licence to complete his unfinished works before bidding farewell to the world. The only concession he can get is that virtue must be man's supreme aim; he must leave glory to take care of itself. He is given the advice to abandon his literary enterprises forthwith; but the close of the dialogue shows clearly enough that he does not mean to take it. He does indeed promise "to be true to himself" and to attend to his soul; but he intimates that worldly affairs also require his immediate attention, and he can only entreat the kindly aid of Augustine and "Truth," who have no such distractions. Obviously in this last section he is only half convinced by the arguments of his conscience; his "natural bent" is too strong for complete submission. He accepts the saint's dictum that glory is "the shadow of virtue"; but though he makes no opposition, he plainly thinks (with Cicero)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Est gloria solida quædam res et expressa, non adumbrata" (*Tusc. Disp.* III. 2).

that it has a substance of its own, apart from its companion. So much we gather from a later work, in which, while repeating the metaphor, he spoils it by the assertion that glory sometimes takes the foremost place.<sup>1</sup> In one of his *Canzoni* (generally dated at the time of his crowning) he represents them as "twins"<sup>2</sup> and as equally neglected by the men of his own day. His sincere conviction appears in his argument that while we have to be on earth, we may strive after earthly glory so long as we do not neglect that which is eternal. That is, he was in search of a workable compromise; but he was too honest to represent the saint as yielding to his desire. The apology lately made<sup>3</sup> for his inconsistency in longing for the applause of the crowd whom he despised—viz. that it was "the ideal Italians" whose praise he coveted—is more ingenious than convincing. He was aware that his contemporaries could not appreciate his real merit; but he was eager enough to win their plaudits as an instalment of the fame with posterity, for which he ardently longed. We have already alluded<sup>4</sup> to the novelty of Petrarch's thirst for glory and to the fact that it was his heritage from the ancients whom he loved. To capitulate on this point to his latent asceticism would have been treachery to the cause to which he had devoted his life.

Although this work, as he says, was withheld from his contemporaries, we cannot doubt that he meant it to be read by posterity. It was intended to gratify the curiosity which he was sure would be felt as to his personal conduct and character. It seems strange, if this were his motive, that he did not write it in Italian; and the same remark applies to his *Epistle to Posterity*. But we must remember that he rested his hopes of posthumous fame chiefly upon his Latin works; and the habit of writing in Latin had become a "second nature." His style is far from correct or classical; and yet in this book, as in his most careful letters, it is parted by a vast interval from the barbarous and

<sup>1</sup> See *De Rem. Utr. Fort.* i. 92. "Gloria . . . quædam umbra virtutis est . . . illam sequitur, quandoque etiam antecedit."

<sup>2</sup> See C. xii. ("Una donna piu bella"). Glory does indeed say (l. 99), "io per me son un ombra," but just before she had said, "Questa e me d'un seme, Lei d'avanti e me poi produsse un parto" (ll. 74, 75).

<sup>3</sup> Carlini-Minguzzi, p. 117.

<sup>4</sup> See above, p. 118.



formal Latin of the schools. The language, at its best, is an unwieldy instrument for philosophical discussion as compared with Greek ; it is too concrete and objective to lend itself easily to Petrarch's psychological introspection. When we consider that in the field of abstract ideas he had no models but Cicero and Seneca, and that there were no elaborate grammars or dictionaries at hand to enlighten him on the classical use of words, his success in overcoming his difficulties is little short of marvellous. He had practically no guides but his fine taste and his extraordinary memory. But it is in its substance rather than in its form that the book is so conspicuously modern. It is erudite without being heavy ; and the erudition is not paraded, as it is in many of his letters, where it is too often obvious that he is writing for effect. His frequent citations from the ancients are apposite and even felicitous ; while he has the sure instinct of the practised man of letters for appropriate illustrations. The last long speech of Augustine in the final dialogue is masterly in this respect ; in emphasizing the ascetic ideal he borrows the resources of humanism. In order to contrast the brevity of human life with eternity he introduces the story of Aristotle about a race of small animals near the Black Sea,<sup>1</sup> who live but for a day. "The one who dies at sunrise dies young ; he who lives till noon is middle-aged ; he who departs with the sun has reached extreme old age." The first to use this fable as a metaphor was Cicero<sup>2</sup> ; but it is Petrarch who effectively develops it by an elaborate comparison with the lot of man.

The philosophy of the work, if it can be called such,<sup>3</sup> posits (1) the paramount claim of faith to regulate conduct and (2) the superiority of the soul over the body, of immortality over the things of earth. There is no evidence that Petrarch ever read the philosophical treatises of the Schoolmen ; he had an instinctive dislike of their methods. He did not possess a systematizing mind ; he had no love for the precise rules and rigid processes of logic. He boasted of being an eclectic, of belonging to no

<sup>1</sup> These animals were said to inhabit the banks of the River Hypanis (the Bog) near its mouth.

<sup>2</sup> *Tusc. Disp.* I. 39. Presumably it is taken from Aristotle's *History of Animals*.

<sup>3</sup> It is plain from the *Secret*, especially from P.'s connexion of Augustine's works with Plato (see B. ed. p. 382), that P. considered philosophy as including theology.

special philosophic sect<sup>1</sup>; this attitude, perhaps imitated from Cicero, expresses his revolt against the controversies prevalent in the Schools. If the saying of Coleridge be true that every man is born a Platonist or an Aristotelian, Petrarch certainly belonged to the former class, of which there were few representatives in the fourteenth century. The works of Aristotle, known only through incorrect translations, were then treated with almost as much reverence as the Scriptures; he was "the Master of those who know."<sup>2</sup> This worship of Aristotle jarred upon Petrarch, who had little respect for popular "idols."<sup>3</sup> Such knowledge of Plato as he could gain from Cicero and Augustine had convinced him that the idealist philosopher came much nearer to Christian truth than the analytic mind of his successor. In a work of his old age,<sup>4</sup> in which he compares their respective merits, Petrarch endeavours to do justice to Aristotle, while protesting against Averrhöism as a distortion of his teaching. His preoccupation in the *Secret*, as in his other works, is with moral philosophy; and while Plato is extolled,<sup>5</sup> Aristotle is seldom mentioned. Our poet possessed three Latin commentaries on the Nicomachean Ethics, his manuscript of which is extant at Paris<sup>6</sup>; and the rarity of his marginal notes seems to show that he gave little study to that work. We have seen one reason for this; perhaps we may find another in the fact that he found Aristotle's style repellent.

He more than once expresses his delight at Augustine's appreciation of the ancient writers; and his own position in the matter would seem to be that while they are highly useful in illustrating revealed truth, they must be firmly set aside whenever they come into conflict with it.<sup>7</sup> The originality of Petrarch in the *Secret* consists not in his attitude to Christian doctrine, which

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *F.* VI. 2 (Frac. I. 310) to San Vito (translated above, Vol. I. p. 343), "Non sectas amo, sed verum."

<sup>2</sup> Dante, *Inf.* IV. 131.

<sup>3</sup> See *F.* I. 11 (an early letter) and the work mentioned in the next note (edited by L. M. Capelli, Paris, 1906) pp. 40, 41, 72-80.

<sup>4</sup> The *De Sui ipsius et multorum ignorantia*, written in 1367.

<sup>5</sup> In *F.* XXII. 10 (to Nelli) he calls him "philosophorum maximus." In the *Trionfo della Fama* Plato takes precedence of Aristotle in the procession of philosophers; and that this has nothing to do with the order of time is proved by the names that follow.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. de Nolhac, *P. et L'Hum.* ii. 147-152. The commentaries are those of Eustachius, Aspasius, and Michael of Ephesus.

<sup>7</sup> That is his view in the passage from *F.* VI. 2, cited above, Vol. I. p. 344.

he accepts as fundamental, but in his insistence on the need of a wide knowledge of all human thought in order to illustrate and confirm that doctrine. With him philosophy is "not an abstract science, but a rule of life."<sup>1</sup> Hence arose his sympathy with the treatises of Cicero and Seneca, who discoursed calmly and suggestively upon the problems of existence without cumbering themselves with an apparatus of terms and distinctions. If Petrarch himself could have attained this philosophic calm, his life would have been at once happier and more useful to others.

Why was it, then, that he so utterly missed this desired haven? Why was he constantly restless and miserable, the sport of contending forces? Professor Bartoli lays the blame upon his "mysticism"—a disorder which he calls "the bubonic plague of souls in the great lazaretto of the Middle Ages."<sup>2</sup> The chapter which he devotes to this subject displays minute knowledge of the poet's character and writings, but it is very unilluminating, because he has but a vague notion of what he means by this "plague." He often seems to identify it with Christianity itself or with a genuine belief in the world to come. But surely he uses the term "mysticism" with a wholly improper connotation. What he means by it is the ascetic strain in Petrarch's temperament; but the word itself—a grand word with a very definite history—implies rather the habit of regarding religion as an experience of eternity. The Professor has this ground for his denunciation—that in the Middle Ages the words "religion" and "religious" had come to connote asceticism; popular opinion—one might say even the Church itself—had committed the grave error of confounding the means with the end. Petrarch could hardly conceive of religion except in terms of asceticism; yet it was really the ascetic view of life—in spite of the sympathy with it ingrained in one-half of his nature—against which the other half made a sturdy and continuous protest. From the sympathy came the sleepless nights of terror, the constant contemplation of imminent death in all its hideous details, the dread of eternal torment; from the revolt against it arose his absorption in the study of antiquity, his determination to order his life in his own way, his furious invectives against ecclesiastical corruption. He stood upon the border-line between two great eras of the human spirit; and the tragedy of his career is that in

<sup>1</sup> Carlini-Minguzzi, p. 151.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.* p. 55.



his own person he seemed to incarnate the dissidence between them, though he felt that an agreement ought to be possible. He saw, as from a Pisgah peak, the dawn of intellectual freedom. What he could not see was that the mists through which he had climbed would be dispersed by the coming day. The world would gradually learn that the essence of Christianity was not asceticism, but the pure love of God and of man in Him. All exercises which did not tend, through self-denial and self-forgetfulness, to produce that love, were not only not the end, but did not even lead towards it. Petrarch's ascetic practices were centred in self and self-torture, and therefore they were bound to fail of their purpose; they increased the consciousness of his misery, instead of helping him to forget it. Perhaps it would have been hard in any age for so self-centred a man to find religious peace. But few to-day can read the *Secret* without seeing that Petrarch's imaginary confessor, by feeding his self-conceit and by failing to lead his thoughts away from his own personality, was missing the true method of coping with his disease.

The views of the poet's biographers as to the effect of his severe self-examination upon his religious life have been various and conflicting. M. Fuzet naturally thinks that such a soul-upheaval produced, at the moment, a real contrition for his irregularities, which issued seven years later in his definite conversion.<sup>1</sup> My view would rather be that in a man of his temperament an instantaneous conversion, which can be dated by the calendar like that of Augustine, was a psychological impossibility. A careful reader of his letters written after 1343 or 1350 will detect few signs of so radical a change. Professor Segré, in an able essay contrasting the *Secret* with Augustine's *Confessions*,<sup>2</sup> maintains that this conflict between the two sides of Petrarch's nature remained absolutely without result. His pessimism, says this writer, settled upon him like a black cloud with his advancing years; his will continued always "flaccid, inert, unable to respond to the pricks of his conscience."<sup>3</sup> Is there no presumption in thus anticipating the sentence of the recording angel? We know nothing of the poet's inner life except what he

<sup>1</sup> *Pétrarque* (Lille, 1892), pp. 170, 171, 267. The final conversion he places in the Jubilee of 1350 on the strength of *Sen.* VIII. 1; but see note to Excursus VII. on *Ep. Post.* (n. 3, p. 419, below).

<sup>2</sup> The first essay in his *Studi Petrarqueschi* (Florence, 1903), pp. 1-136.

<sup>3</sup> Pp. 129, 130.

has chosen to tell us; we may naturally suspect that he has exaggerated his impotence of will, as he has certainly exaggerated his other griefs and miseries. Prof. Segré's unfavourable view of his character takes no account of the dates of the writings quoted; he never attempts to inquire whether there is any symptom of improvement in his later life. There is certainly a tone of increasing seriousness in his later letters; nor is it fair to attribute this solely to his frequent loss of friends or to the other anxieties of which he so often complains. He could not have made any sudden change in his outer life without entering the cloister; and that, as he knew well, would have been a fatal step, for which his nature utterly unfitted him.

We have positive proof that from the year 1347 he endeavoured to order his life on strictly religious rules. In that year, as we shall see, he paid his first visit to his cloistered brother; and their intimate conversation was fruitful in resolves, which five years later he tells his brother<sup>1</sup> that he had carried into effect. He mentions three in particular—the more frequent practice of confession, the recitation of the "office" not merely once in the day, but at each of the "seven hours," and the entire avoidance of illicit connexions. The observance of the second practice was peculiarly difficult for a literary man, whose time, though nominally his own, was frequently occupied in business and even in public missions of a secular kind. In a very interesting letter of two or three years later<sup>2</sup> he tells his correspondent that he is devoting a large part of his time to sacred literature, which he used to despise, and that his favourite book of poetry is now the Psalms of David, which he keeps under his pillow at night and would wish to have beside him at his death. He was so impressed with this Bible poetry that about the same time he composed seven Penitential Psalms of his own,<sup>3</sup> which breathe a spirit of repentance and devotion. These were so much admired in the

<sup>1</sup> *F. X.* 5 (*Frac.* II. 100) of June 11, 1352. He expressly mentions rising for this purpose at midnight and at dawn in those short nights of June; and his quotation of *Ps. cxix.* 164 ("seven times a day do I praise Thee") would seem to mean that he observed the "hours."

<sup>2</sup> *F. XXII.* 10, to Nelli (*Frac.* III. 147-149), Milan, September 18th, apparently 1354 or 1355. (*M. Cochin, Un ami de P.*, Paris, 1892, p. 148, sees reason for preferring one of these dates.) P. compares this admiration of his for the Psalms with Plato's for the *Mimes* of Sophron. (This is taken from Quintilian I. x. 17.)

<sup>3</sup> They are in the collected editions of 1496, 1501, 1554, and 1581, and were reprinted separately several times in the sixteenth century.

early days of printing that they were translated into several European languages, and were paraphrased by our Elizabethan poet Chapman more than three hundred years ago.<sup>1</sup> There are also extant six prayers in Latin,<sup>2</sup> which claim to be Petrarch's composition and are now generally considered authentic. One is a prayer for daily use, which contains a fervent petition for assistance in death. The others—one to the "blessed" Agatha, another to the Virgin-Mother—are prayers for protection in storms, of which the poet more than once expresses his extreme dread. Finally the last Ode in the *Canzoniere*—and, as some think, the most beautiful in the collection—is an invocation to the Blessed Virgin,<sup>3</sup> entreating her to guide his steps and accept it as a proof of his changed desires. He doubtless thought that this lovely poem, with its pious aspirations and absolute freedom alike from pedantry and from passion, would fitly close in penitence the series begun in sin and struggle and continued in accents of bitter regret.

We shall see in the sequel how his tenacious adherence to the Catholic faith never wavered from first to last, and shone forth alike in his ascetic and in his controversial works<sup>4</sup> composed in his latter days. His *Unaddressed Letters* and his sonnets against the Papacy at Avignon have sometimes been adduced as proof that he was a kind of "concealed reformer," a precursor of Huss and Luther. The suggestion will not bear a moment's examination. Petrarch was not of the stuff of which reformers are made. He spent his youth too near to the centre of Papal autocracy to have any doubts as to the validity of its claims; nor was he sufficiently familiar with theology and early Church history to have formed independent opinions on those subjects. He may have seen the evil of over-centralization and of the secular policy of the Popes; but he was so deeply convinced of the indefeasible right of Rome to rule the world that he could never dream of interference with her Christian supremacy. What he disliked was that the Papacy should be removed from the true

<sup>1</sup> See his *Poems and Minor Translations* (1875), pp. 133-143.

<sup>2</sup> First published by A. Hortis in his *Scritti Inediti di F. P.* (Trieste, 1874). He thinks these six genuine, though there are others ascribed to P. in one MS. which could only have been written by a priest (pp. 297-301).

<sup>3</sup> C. VIII. Part II. ("Vergine bella"). Mrs. Jerrold gives a good translation, pp. 263-268.

<sup>4</sup> *Vit. Sol.*, *Ot. Rel.*, *De Rem. Utr. Fort.*, and *De Sui ips. et mult. ignor.*



seat of Empire and become virtually an appanage of the French crown ; he regarded this arrangement as a detraction from the dignity and the due moral authority of the Supreme Pontiff. He felt it also as a slur upon his native land ; and his strictures on the corruption of the Avignon Court, which were never published during his life,<sup>1</sup> doubtless took a darker shade from this circumstance. They have since been resented, not as being wholly false, but as coming from one who had no right to pose as a " censor morum." The implication is not unfounded ; it was hardly decent in one, who had done no spiritual work for the Church and was enjoying his whole income from her sinecures, to hold her rulers up to shame. But Petrarch himself, except for a single sentence in his will,<sup>2</sup> seems to have been scarcely aware that his own position was open to censure.

It is at least some testimony to the blamelessness of his outward conduct in later life that although his fame and his taste for controversy brought him many detractors, he was never accused either of serious vices or of heterodox opinions. Had all his humanist successors in the next century been men of a like stamp, the movement might have retarded, instead of accelerating, the revolt of the northern nations from the Roman sway. The tradition of Petrarch's scrupulous piety lasted for several generations after his death. One of his biographers in the next century, Sicco Polentone, says that he often lay down at night fully dressed that he might rise at midnight to say his office<sup>3</sup> ; he tells us himself that he awoke with the dawn to recite the prayers of Prime.<sup>4</sup> Beccadelli informs us that he fasted throughout Lent and on the Vigils, and every Friday restricted his diet to bread and water, even to the verge of old age.<sup>5</sup> He was so much idolized by his later friends that their witness may seem suspect ; but they paid admiring tribute not merely to his social and literary gifts, but to the devoutness of his daily life. Benintendi says that no man was more faithful to religion than

<sup>1</sup> Certainly not the *S.T. Letters*, which he carefully concealed. Of the so-called " Babylonish Captivity " sonnets (*Ss.* 91, 105-107) we have no evidence one way or the other.

<sup>2</sup> He speaks of the Cathedral of Parma, of which he was the Archdeacon " useless and nearly always absent."

<sup>3</sup> The passage is in Tomasini (*P. Redivivus*, 1650, p. 192), though the writer's name was not then known.

<sup>4</sup> *F.* X. 5 and *F.* XXII. 10.

<sup>5</sup> See his life of P. (also in Tomasini, pp. 213-241).

he—"a trait very rare in a philosopher."<sup>1</sup> Boccaccio depicts him in a Latin work<sup>2</sup> as "pious, gentle, devout, modest—a venerable sanctuary of truth, the glory of virtue, the pattern of Catholic sanctity." Filippo Villani asserts<sup>3</sup> that the friend in whose arms he died saw his soul rise to the ceiling in the shape of a white cloud before it finally vanished from sight. Fra Bonaventura of Prague, an Augustinian and afterwards Cardinal, in delivering an oration on Petrarch at his funeral, described him as "a saint." These testimonies, even if exaggerated, must be allowed some weight against the modern idea that the poet was too weak and double-minded ever to reform his conduct. His character at its best was far removed from sainthood; but he honestly desired to live in accordance with his faith, and his efforts, however imperfect, may at last find a merciful Judge.

<sup>1</sup> See his letter to P. in B. ed. p. 1087.

<sup>2</sup> In the *Genealogia Deorum*, Lib. XIV.

<sup>3</sup> See his life of P. in de Sade, t. III., *Pièces Justificatives*, p. 12. The friend was Lombardo da Serico, and the story sounds like a fable. For the various accounts of P.'s death, see Chap. XL.

## CHAPTER XVII

### PAPAL POLICY IN ITALY AND THE EMPIRE (1343-1347)

#### *The Canzone "Italia Mia."*

AT the opening of the eventful year in which Petrarch composed his *Secret* (1343) the health of his patron, Robert King of Naples, was visibly declining. Though not aged (he was only sixty-four<sup>1</sup>), his constitution had been impaired by the losses and disappointments of his long reign. In 1328 his only son Charles, Duke of Calabria, had died of fever leaving two infant daughters, Joan and Maria, to their grandfather's care. The succession to the kingdom had been settled upon Joan (or if she died without issue, upon Maria), by arrangement between Robert, his nephew Carobert, King of Hungary, as representing the elder branch of his house, and Pope John XXII. as suzerain of the realm. Joan was to marry Andrew, Carobert's second son; and his eldest son Louis might, if he chose, espouse Maria. In 1333 Carobert had brought Andrew (then only six years old) to Naples to be affianced to his future bride, and had left him there for his education, as both were then too young to marry. At Easter, 1342, Robert knighted his future grandson-in-law; and in August of the same year, soon after Carobert's death,<sup>2</sup> the union took place at Naples, when Joan was in her seventeenth year, and her consort eighteen months younger. The new King Louis of Hungary was inclined to evade his share of the compact by seeking the hand of Margaret of Bohemia, daughter of the future Emperor Charles IV. The scarcely concealed object of the Hungarians, both at Visegrad and Naples, was to secure the Neapolitan crown for Andrew. But this did not suit the purpose either of Robert or of the Pope. The former

<sup>1</sup> He was born in 1278 (Baddeley, *Robert the Wise*, pp. 4, 269). Villani says he was eighty and another chronicler sixty-nine (*ibid.* p. 270, n.).

<sup>2</sup> He died in May or June, 1342. He was the son of Charles Martel (b. 1271), Robert's elder brother, and was only ten years younger than his uncle.



wished to keep the succession in his own family, and the Pope did not favour the extension of Hungarian influence in the south. The idea of a queen-regnant was then a novelty and opposed to French traditions ; but the succession of Joan in her own right seemed the only way out of an awkward position.

The situation was complicated by the fact that two younger brothers of Robert—Philip of Taranto and John of Durazzo, who both had male children of full age—were possessed of principalities in his kingdom. Both these princes had already died—in 1331 and 1335 respectively ; but they had left widows, who had powerful connexions <sup>1</sup> and were ambitious for the future of their children. They were jealous of the Hungarian matrimonial arrangements ; and since the young King of Hungary had fixed his affections elsewhere, the hand of the Princess Maria was now open to their rivalry. The court of Naples was at that time the most polished and (as some say <sup>2</sup>) the most corrupt in Europe ; and Andrew, a morose and rather boorish Prince, and his Hungarian suite, were regarded as interlopers, who were plotting to restore the sovereignty to the elder line. Thus in the closing years of Robert's reign his family was a hotbed of suspicion and intrigue ; and the old King had good cause for alarm as to the state of his realm after his decease.

By the original grant to Charles of Anjou the Holy See had gained a firm hold in the future disposal of its "fief," and might claim to administer the realm during a minority. When Robert in 1342 did homage to the new Pontiff through his legate and near relative, the Cardinal of St. Martin,<sup>3</sup> the arrangements to be made after his death must have been under discussion. Yet it was not till January 7, 1343, when his end was plainly at hand, that the King executed his Will. By this document the compact of ten years before was upheld. He bequeathed his dominions in Italy and Provence, which were not to be divided, to his eldest granddaughter or, in case of her death without issue, to her sister Maria. The latter was still held bound to marry the King

<sup>1</sup> Catherine, Philip's widow, was daughter of Charles of Valois, younger brother of the French King, and (through her mother) titular Empress of Constantinople. Agnes, John's widow, was sister of the Cardinal Talleyrand-Périgord, who had been Clement's chief supporter in his election as Pope.

<sup>2</sup> Sismondi, *Hist. des Rep. Ital.* IV. p. 206.

<sup>3</sup> Aimeric de Chalus (or Chastellun), Bishop of Chartres, who went to Naples for that purpose in 1342.

of Hungary, if he desired the match; if not, she was to give her hand to the eldest grandson of the King of France <sup>1</sup> (then only six years old) or to the latter's second son, Philip of Orleans, who was only a year or two older. No provision was made for Andrew's future, except that if Joan died without heirs, he was to have the principality of Salerno. During the minority of the princesses, which was to last till their twenty-fifth year, the realm was to be administered by a Regency Council of five, headed by Queen Sancia and the Chancellor, Philippe de Cabassoles, Bishop of Cavaillon (Petrarch's friend), as representing the Papacy, with three other magnates, none of whom were of the King's family, except his natural son, Charles of Artois. Finally he committed his kingdom and heirs to the paternal care of the Holy See.

This instrument provided perhaps the best arrangement possible at the moment; but it satisfied none of the warring factions at court. The rival families of Taranto and Durazzo were both excluded from the Regency; and the Hungarians were mortified that their prince-consort was almost ignored. The old Queen Sancia was under the influence of the "Spiritual" Franciscans, still distrusted, if not proscribed, by the Curia at Avignon; and she was known to be desirous of entering the cloister—a design which she carried out after a year's interval.<sup>2</sup> Robert evidently feared that his dispositions might be frustrated by court jealousies as soon as he was gone; for on January 16 he called to his bedside Joan, Andrew, and Maria, and made them swear on the Gospel in the presence of his judge (Niccolo d'Alife) and thirteen other witnesses that they would faithfully observe the provisions of his Will.<sup>3</sup> Three days later (January 19)<sup>4</sup> he expired, and was laid in a sumptuous tomb at the monastery of Sta. Chiara. The single Latin hexameter there inscribed<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Baddeley (*op. cit.* p. 282) carelessly says it was to his son, the Duke of Normandy (already married), although he quotes the very text of the Will, which specifies the latter's eldest son.

<sup>2</sup> She became one of the nuns of Sta. Chiara in January, 1344, and died July, 1345.

<sup>3</sup> D. Gravina in his *Chronicon*, cap. 6 (Naples, 1890 ed. p. 13) says that the Taranto and Durazzo families were present at this scene and took the oath; but the allusion to it in the Will (as quoted by Baddeley, p. 284) makes no mention of them.

<sup>4</sup> This appears to be correct, though various dates (from 17th to 21st) are given.

<sup>5</sup> "Cernite Robertum regem virtute refertum."

has been attributed to our poet, but is wholly unworthy of him. He was asked by Niccolo d'Alife to compose an epitaph, which he did after much delay<sup>1</sup>; but it was too long,<sup>2</sup> or perhaps arrived too late, to be placed on the tomb.

The news of the sovereign's death would take at least a fortnight to reach his Provençal dominions; and the following letter of Petrarch<sup>3</sup> to his friend Barbato at Naples expresses the first tumult of his dismay.

"My fears have come true; the calamity I dreaded has fallen upon me; sighing and sorrow have succeeded to prayers and foreboding. Not long before the time I foretold, our illustrious King has left us; and though his age be far advanced, his loss is very bitter. Alas, my excellent Barbato! how I dread lest the event confirm also those presentiments of coming ill, which my anxious mind too confidently suggests! I feel grave concern at the youth of the younger Queen and the new King, at the old age and declared purpose<sup>4</sup> of the other Queen, at the temper and morals of the courtiers. May I prove in this a false prophet! But I see two lambs committed to the guardianship of a pack of wolves, and a kingdom without a King. For why should I call him 'King,' who is ruled by another<sup>5</sup> and exposed, moreover, to the avarice and cruelty of a crowd. So, if on the day when Plato departed this life the sun seemed to have fallen from heaven,<sup>6</sup> what shall we say of his death, who was both a second Plato in mind, and second to no King in wisdom or in glory—whose death, too, has opened the way to so many perils from all quarters? May Almighty God bring a favourable issue and disprove the need of my loyal distress! But if all turn out well and my fears be superfluous, who, my friend, is to be my mentor and the healer of my grief? To whom shall I dedicate my studies and the few endowments I have? Who is there to raise my tottering hopes and to rouse me from sloth? I had two patrons of my talent and have lost them both in this one year.<sup>7</sup> In my regrets for the first I found Lælius a fitting

<sup>1</sup> The epitaph is *Ep. Metr.* II. ix. (enclosed in the previous letter (II. viii. to Niccolo d'Alife), and consisting of twenty-five hexameters. The request was probably made on his visit to Naples in November, 1343; but P. does not seem to have sent it till 1345.

<sup>2</sup> In II. viii. he asks N. A. to shorten it.

<sup>3</sup> *F. V. i.*

<sup>4</sup> Sancia's purpose of entering the cloister.

<sup>5</sup> He seems to refer to Andrew's minority, but he is evidently unaware of the terms of the Will.

<sup>6</sup> This is taken from John of Salisbury, *Polic.* VII. 6 (ed. Fradin, Lyons, 1513, 226 *bis*).

<sup>7</sup> The other "patron" is plainly (from what follows) the Bishop of



partner, when I was still in Italy ; in this second grief, which will last my life, I seek your sympathy to-day. My lot has generally been to console my friends ; now I can discover neither reason nor language for consoling myself. Hence I despair of comfort and find prose and poetry alike without avail. Above all, the hope of seeing you there—on the spot—bids me say no more ; I will obey your call, and we will soon weep together at leisure. Meanwhile I have written you this in tears at ‘Sorgia’s fount’—my noted haven in storms, whither I fled last night by myself, after the sad news had found me in the morning by the banks of the Rhone.”

This letter is strangely dated in all the manuscripts “May 29th,”<sup>1</sup> though by that time the sovereign’s death must have been public property in Provence for nearly four months. The mistake may have been made by Petrarch or his amanuensis in copying it for publication ; for it was evidently written early in February on the arrival of the news. The most surprising thing in it is the statement that he intends to go to Naples. The contemplated visit must have been a private one ; he could then have had no inkling of the political mission, on which, as we shall presently see, he was sent in the following autumn.

The assertion has been often made<sup>2</sup> that this mission of the poet was undertaken on behalf of the Pope, because Clement considered that his guardianship had been ignored in the dispositions made by the late King. Had this been the case, Petrarch must have been sent much earlier, and the Papal Registers would contain some evidence of so important a charge. But in fact for the space of many months after Robert’s death,

Lombes, who died in September, 1341 ; but P., with characteristic inaccuracy, represents the losses as occurring in one year. Fracasetti (*It.* ii. 3, 4, *Adnot.* 94) thinks this explanation inadmissible, and suggests Convenevole da Prato, whom P. would never have called his “dux,” with whom Lælius had nothing to do, and the time of whose death is unknown !

<sup>1</sup> “IV. Kal Jun.” All the MSS. (even the “Colbertin” at Paris) have this false date, which is plainly impossible. De Sade (II. 84, n.) conjectures “IV. Kal Febr.” (January 29), but the news could hardly have arrived in ten days. I should suggest “IV. Non. Febr.” (February 2).

<sup>2</sup> First by de Sade (ii. 141), who, as usual, is copied by others (notably by Fracasetti in both his commentaries) and even by Baddeley in his first work (*Joanna I. of Naples*, 1893, p. 42, n.), which is full of inaccuracies. But in *Robert the Wise and his Heirs* (1897), he proves clearly that for some months Clement meditated no change (pp. 283–298). P.’s praise of his friend, the Bishop of Cavaillon, in *F.* V. 3, of November, 1343 (*Frac.* I. 257), looks as if he then knew nothing of the new policy.

the Pope showed no sign of displeasure at his testamentary arrangements, of which he must have been previously aware. The registers prove that during those months couriers were constantly conveying briefs and letters to Naples ; and through his own representative on the Regency Council Clement must have known all that was passing there. It was not till November—two months after Petrarch's departure—that he changed his policy, perhaps in consequence of Hungarian pressure. Joan, no doubt by her Council's advice, at first urged him to consent to the coronation of her consort as " King (titular) of Sicily " ; but from various causes that ceremony was long deferred, and indeed never took place.

On another matter the Pope abetted an intrigue at Court, which traversed the positive directions of the Will. Through her brother, Cardinal Talleyrand, Agnes of Durazzo applied for a dispensation for her son, Duke Charles, to marry a relative not within the first or second degree ; and Clement must have known well enough, though the dispensation mentioned no name, that the union was to be with the Princess Maria. Indeed at the same time (February 26) he even granted the family permission to have priests to celebrate " any of the sacraments " in prohibited places of worship, such as the chapel at their own residence. The Regency Council and the two Queens consented to the match ; and Charles was publicly affianced to Maria on March 26, 1343. But the Durazzo family had no intention of waiting, as the court supposed, until the Princess was old enough for marriage. They enticed her, though barely in her fifteenth year, into their palace, where the young couple were clandestinely married and at once began cohabitation. The Queens were exceedingly indignant at this intrigue ; and their anger was presumably fanned by the rival family of Taranto and by the Hungarians at Court—already chagrined at the inferior position of Andrew. They dispatched a strong complaint to the Pope, and must have been much astonished at the terms of his reply in the following June. It was plain that he was a party to the plot ; for he reproved them sharply for their opposition, though at the same time he enjoins Maria and the successful Agnes to " humble themselves " before the Queens, and warns the disappointed house of Taranto not to foment discord.<sup>1</sup> Yet,

<sup>1</sup> *Archiv. Vat. Clem. VI.*, Anno ii., June 5, 10, and 22, 1343.

when taxed by the court of Hungary with granting the dispensation, he protested his ignorance of the use which was to be made of it. Elizabeth, the Queen-Mother of Hungary, came to Naples in July to see for herself the state of affairs; and after a two months' residence there, and before paying a hasty visit to Rome, she sent some of her retinue to place her views before Clement. Her coming must have been far from welcome to her Neapolitan relatives; indeed her designs upon the throne for her son were so patent that Joan's eagerness for her husband's crowning was considerably cooled before the end of the year. The Pope had been placed in a difficulty through his own duplicity; and he now began to wonder whether his more direct intervention would be beneficial.

But before adverting to his change of policy, we must glance at the effect which his accession and the disappearance from the scene of Robert, the mainstay of the Guelfs, had produced upon the situation in Northern Italy. In the tenth chapter<sup>1</sup> we referred to the favourite plan of Benedict for destroying German influence in Lombardy and Romagna—viz. by appointing the chief Ghibelline despots to "vicariates" under the Holy See and so detaching them from alliance with "the Bavarian." Neither he nor his successors seemed to trouble about the welter of strife caused by the quarrels of these potentates among themselves, so long as they kept their hands off the States of the Church and ceased to support the Imperial "rebel" against the Papacy. This was one manifest and very untoward consequence of a succession of French Popes and of the removal of their residence beyond the Alps. They had tacitly renounced their predecessors' claim to be arbiters in Italian politics in favour of a visionary scheme to give the law to the whole Western world and to act as protectors of the rising power of France. Petrarch had very good reason for his bold remark to Clement<sup>2</sup> that he wished the Pope knew as much about Italy as he did about France and Britain. The interests of the Papacy in Italy were committed to Legates—usually Frenchmen—who despised the petty squabbles of princelets and republics, and who adopted the maxim of the now vanished Austrian crown, "Divide et impera." They thought that the more these factious people quarrelled among themselves, the more ready they would be to listen to Papal

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. I. p. 409.

<sup>2</sup> See Chap. XV. p. 198.



monitions. It was a fatal mistake, as in no long time they were forced to acknowledge. The Popes of the two previous centuries had resisted the Imperial prerogative—it is true, for their own ends—and had been regarded as champions of Italian liberty. Their efforts to create an independent Papal State had met with little resistance as long as they were Italians; but when the Papacy was removed from Italy, its occupants came to be regarded there more as secular princes—mere henchmen of France—who had their own political axe to grind. The Italian Guelfs took little interest in the protracted struggle between the Avignon Popes and “the Bavarian”; they had ceased to fear the Empire, and they no longer considered the Pope as fighting their battles. They resented his coquetting with the Ghibelline lords, and were even inclined to make terms with their old enemy.

An instance of this temper occurred in the last months of Benedict’s pontificate. Florence had bought from Mastino della Scala for a huge sum <sup>1</sup> the town of Lucca, which she had so long coveted, and had thereby plunged herself in war with Pisa, then supported by Milan (July, 1341). She was barely able to throw a small force into her new dependency before it was invested by the Pisans; and an army sent to its succour suffered a severe defeat under its walls (October 2). Thereupon Florence applied for help to her old friend King Robert, who—it is said from parsimony—was unwilling to comply, and sent only an insignificant force of 600 French cavalry under the Duke of Athens.<sup>2</sup> A party in Florence wished to solicit the aid of the excommunicated “Bavarian”; and envoys were even sent to Louis at Trent to propose an alliance.<sup>3</sup> A number of German knights actually took service for high pay in the armies of the republic; but domestic troubles in Germany, combined with some distrust on the side of Florence, prevented the conclusion

<sup>1</sup> The original sum agreed upon was 250,000 gold florins; but after the outbreak of war with Pisa, Mastino reduced his terms to 150,000.

<sup>2</sup> Walter de Brienne (VI.), Duke of Athens, was descended from a French knight, who had acquired a principality in Greece during the crusades. His father (Walter V.) had lost his patrimony a generation earlier; and the son became a mere soldier of fortune, though he married a princess (Beatrice) of the Neapolitan House of Taranto. He was needy and rapacious, and was “Captain of the People” at Florence from May, 1342, to August, 1343, when his oppression caused him to be expelled. He fell at Poitiers in 1356.

<sup>3</sup> Napier, *Florentine History*, ii. 56, 57.

of a definite compact. But the mere proposal should have given the purpled statesmen at Avignon much food for reflection. It meant that the Empire was no longer considered a danger to popular liberties in Italy; and it indicated an increasing disposition on the part of rich Italian communities to hire foreign mercenaries to fight under their banner.

This practice, which was to be the curse of Italy during the next two centuries, had already become common. In the successful war which Pisa had just waged with Florence, and which terminated with the surrender of Lucca on July 6, 1342, the Ghibelline city had employed a band of these German mercenaries under a captain named Werner ("Guarnieri"), which she dismissed at the conclusion of hostilities. The maintenance of such troops, when their aid was no longer required, was too great an expense for a commercial republic; but in the peculiar circumstances of the time their employer had no guarantee that some of them would not be found fighting against him on the next opportunity. In the present case this was exactly what happened. A portion of the disbanded forces transferred their services to Luchino Visconti, Pisa's late ally; and in the following year (1343) that restless despot, by means of a relative, fomented a conspiracy in Pisa against the government, which was discovered, and the chief conspirators fled. Luchino promptly invaded the territory of the Pisans<sup>1</sup> and defeated them in battle; but after a second indecisive campaign in the unwholesome climate of the Maremma, which cost him many men, he was glad to conclude peace (1345).

Luchino had managed, by economy of his finances, to maintain a small standing army of about 5,000 men, which made him a terror to his neighbours. If these mercenaries were to be kept in hand, they must be maintained not only in war, but in peace. Their pay must be regular and superior to any tempting offer by a rival power. The misfortune of the mercantile republics—especially those who from jealousy had exiled their own military class, the nobles—was that they had no standing army. The custom had grown up among them to hire these adventurers—relics of the imperial expeditions of Henry VII. and Louis<sup>2</sup>—

<sup>1</sup> This was the war which was in progress when P. landed on Pisan territory in September, 1343. See below, Chap. XVIII. p. 315.

<sup>2</sup> Of course some republics—notably Florence in 1282—had hired

for one or two campaigns and dismiss them at the first truce, which might prove to be wholly insecure. The consequence was that they fought without enthusiasm—indeed with an eye to the chance that they might soon be fighting on the other side. Before the time at which we have arrived, these bands had little internal cohesion, and were chiefly attracted by the prospect of rich booty.<sup>1</sup> In the last half of the century, after the peace of Bretigny (1359), they became even more formidable because, without losing their predatory character, they organized themselves under proved leaders with a council at their back, which concluded treaties with cities or princes ; at that period they have been fitly called “Nomad Military States.”<sup>2</sup> But when they first became a danger to society in 1342, they were simply brigands under a loose military command. Contemporaries explained the phenomenon as “a disease organic to society, due to malefic planets or to the Divine judgment.”<sup>3</sup> In reality it was the beginning of the dissolution of feudal chivalry, under which the dregs of the northern armies were let loose upon the richest country of the day—then hopelessly disunited, torn by perpetual quarrels and inhabited by citizens too unwarlike to fight their own battles. The rural districts always suffered most from these depredators. They had a wholesome dread of walled towns, which they could not storm without much loss ; they provisioned themselves by ravaging the countryside or by intercepting convoys destined for the towns. They made their raids chiefly at night ; and the terror of their approach drove the villagers to seek refuge within the walls.

The earliest flagrant instance of this brigandage occurred in the first year of Pope Clement, when the old King of Naples was approaching his end. The greater part of the Pisan mercenaries did not join the Visconti on their dismissal. Their leader, “Duke” Werner, persuaded them to remain under his command and undertake a pillaging expedition on their own account in the

soldiers long before. These, however, were not the dregs of an imperial army, but men of high birth—the cream of French chivalry.

<sup>1</sup> In the revolt of the mercenaries of the Florentine league in 1339, they were induced to attack the Milanese territory by the renegade Lodrisio Visconti, simply through the promise of unlimited loot.

<sup>2</sup> See *Sir John Hawkwood: Story of a Condottiere*, translated from the Italian of John Temple-Leader and G. Marcotti by Leader Scott, 1889, p. 44.

<sup>3</sup> Gregorovius (English trans.), Vol. VI, Pt. ii. p. 412.



territory of Siena.<sup>1</sup> They invaded and ravaged the "contado" without the least pretence of a quarrel, and compelled the republic to pay them a "ransom" of 12,000 florins. They then turned to the Papal States, carrying fire and sword through the lands of Perugia and the neighbouring towns, which were forced to buy them off in the same fashion. The band called itself "The Great Company"; and their chief bore upon his corslet the inscription in silver letters, "Duke Werner, the enemy of pity, of mercy and of God." The crafty freebooter preferred not to levy his blackmail till the countryside had been so ravaged that it could no longer support his men. Their number did not exceed 3,000, besides a crowd of camp-followers; but the Duke of Athens, the new "captain" of Florence, thought it prudent to pay them a large sum to keep them out of Tuscany. About Christmas, 1342, the band passed the Apennines into Emilia and helped Malatesta, the despot of Rimini, to subdue the rebellious city of Fano. Its approach caused such alarm in the north that Mastino of Verona, the Estensi of Ferrara and the Pepoli of Bologna formed a league against it and advanced to Faenza to dispute its passage. But the lord of Bologna, hearing that Werner was treating with the disaffected in his own state, preferred the craven policy of bribing him to leave it unmolested; and the band continued its ravages in the lands of Modena, Reggio, and Mantua up to the very gates of Parma. By the autumn of 1343 the brigands were overloaded with booty and wished to return to Germany; and their captain, who knew that the lords of rich Lombardy were better able to defend themselves, was persuaded by a further bribe to break his band into small parties and send them home across the Alps. He thus escaped unpunished for this year of ruthless pillage, and at a later date he returned to Southern Italy to pursue the same profitable trade.<sup>2</sup>

No proof more signal could be given of the weakness and disunion of Italy. What were its rulers doing that they could patiently suffer such an outrage? King Robert, the mainstay of the Guelfs, was gone; but his military reputation—never high—had faded long ago. At this very time his old ally, Florence,

<sup>1</sup> It was chosen simply from its defenceless condition. There is no proof that Pisa or Florence instigated the attack, as stated by Napier (ii. 121).

<sup>2</sup> In 1347 he took service with the King of Hungary in his descent upon Naples.

was suffering under a French adventurer as conscienceless as Werner, whom she managed to expel in August, 1343. But this short-lived tyranny, combined with her recent wars and the imprudence of her banking houses in making large loans to foreign powers, had brought her to the verge of financial ruin. The Ghibelline lords of the northern states were too much occupied with their personal rivalries to repress the excesses of troops, whose aid they might have to invoke in the future. Could not the Pope have accepted the rôle of "Pacificator of Italy"? His own State had been subjected to pillage; and the day was not far off when, even in the secure retreat of Avignon, his successor was to tremble at the approach of these lawless bands.<sup>1</sup> Clement, like Innocent VI., was well aware of his military weakness; and he was inclined to wash his hands of his responsibilities in Central and Northern Italy. Had he been a great Pope, he would have taken the lead in uniting the peninsula against the foreigner.

But his energies were engrossed by two extra-Italian affairs—the struggle between France and England, and the punishment of the German "rebel," who still remained in power after braving the wrath of his two predecessors. He was content to continue Benedict's policy of conferring upon the Ghibelline lords the empty title of "Vicars of the Holy See" and extracting an annual tribute from them in return. One of his first acts was to dispatch Cardinal Curtil to Italy to obtain an assurance that his intended measures against "the Bavarian" would not be resented there. He might have spared his fears. The most powerful princes were playing for their own hand and in the present weakness of the Guelfs needed no Imperial support. Had he been better informed, he would have scented danger in the growing power of Milan. Azzo Visconti, its late lord, had made a name by his military exploits, and had even ventured to erase the Imperial insignia from his coinage and substitute his own device of "the Viper." His uncle and successor, Luchino (1339-1349), more a diplomat than a soldier, was consolidating his strength by incessant intrigue. Giovanni, the ablest of his four brothers, had been elected Archbishop of Milan in 1339; but even Benedict had withheld his sanction—perhaps from a fear of removing the last check upon this all-powerful family. Clement at once

<sup>1</sup> This was in 1361, after the peace of Bretigny. See Chap. XXXII., below.

confirmed the election and thus, as the sequel will prove,<sup>1</sup> was "nursing a viper in his own bosom." His early policy in Italy, if it can be called such, was to aggrandize the great and to ignore all inroads upon the liberties of the poor.

In the meantime, while princes were quarrelling or intriguing and brigands were ravaging her fair lands, Italy seemed at the climax of her misery. Trade languished, except in the great towns; the fields became unsafe for agriculture; whole districts, especially where the plunderers had passed, were utterly desolate. When Petrarch traversed Italy in December, 1343, on his way to Parma, he must have seen on both sides of the Apennines, the ghastly scars inflicted by the "Great Company." His feelings were stirred to their depths; then it was, I am confident,<sup>2</sup> that he poured forth his soul in his poem (*Italia mia*, Canzone XVI.) addressed to the rulers of Italy—one of the noblest odes ever composed in any language. I subjoin the admirable translation by Barbarina, Lady Dacre,<sup>3</sup> acknowledged by a high Italian authority<sup>4</sup> to have preserved the very spirit of the original.

<sup>1</sup> See below, Chap. XXIII.

<sup>2</sup> In the fifteenth century Filelfo asserted that the Canzone was written under Albert of Austria, who died in 1308, when P. was only four years old! All the Italian commentators of the two following centuries (with two exceptions) dated it in the year of "the Bavarian's" descent into Italy (1327, 1328), when P. was a very young man at Avignon and was certainly not wandering in the plain of the Po (l. 6). This opinion was due, as I have tried to prove below, to a misinterpretation of ll. 66, 67; but it has been shared by some moderns, as Muratori, Biagioli, and Leopardi. The two earlier writers, who saw the difficulties of this theory, were S. da Venafro (1533) and G. A. Gesualdo (1540), the former of whom preferred the date of 1346 and the latter that of 1354, when Venice and Genoa were at war. As a variation of the last, Mr. Hollway-Calthrop (pp. 176, 177) suggests the date 1353, when P. on Mont Genève was on his way to Italy; but this theory plainly ignores the indication in l. 6, which moreover will not suit Milan. De Sade (II. Notes xi. pp. 66–71a) was the first to suggest 1344; and he has been followed by Meneghelli, by Carducci in his *Rime di F. P.*, Livorno, 1876 (although he prefers 1344, 1345 after the siege of Parma) and by Zumbini in his "L'Impero" (*Studi sul F. P.*, Florence, 1895, pp. 161–255). This view seems now to be generally accepted in Italy; but A. d'Ancona, in his *Studi di critica e storia letteraria* (1880, pp. 26–38), prefers the date 1370. My reasons for adopting de Sade's view (without Carducci's modification as to the siege of Parma, see n. 2, p. 296, and n. 2, p. 300) are given below, pp. 299–301.

<sup>3</sup> Barbarina (b. 1767), daughter of Admiral Sir Chaloner Ogle, was first married to V. H. Wilmot, afterwards to Thomas Brand, Lord Dacre; she died May 17, 1854. Her first P. translations (as by "Barbarina Wilmot") were published in London in 1805, at Rome in 1818, and at Naples in 1819 and 1826. They were reprinted in Foscolo's *Essays on P.* in 1623 and again in 1836.

<sup>4</sup> Foscolo, in dedicating the above to Lady D., attributes this opinion



" O my own Italy ! though words are vain  
 The mortal wounds to close  
 Unnumbered that thy beauteous bosom stain,  
 Yet may it soothe my pain  
 To sigh forth Tiber's woes  
 And Arno's wrongs, as on Po's saddened shore  
 Sorrowing I wander and my numbers pour.  
 Ruler of Heaven ! by the all-pitying love  
 That could Thy Godhead move  
 To dwell a lowly sojourner on earth,  
 Turn, Lord, on this Thy chosen land <sup>1</sup> Thine eye—  
 See, God of Charity,  
 From what light cause this cruel war <sup>2</sup> has birth ;  
 And the hard hearts, by savage discord steeled,  
 Thou, Father, from on high  
 Touch by my humble voice, that stubborn wrath may yield.

Ye, to whose sovereign hands the fates confide  
 Of this fair land the reins—  
 This land for which no pity wrings your breast—  
 Why does the stranger's sword her plains infest ?  
 That her green fields be dyed  
 Hope ye with blood from the Barbarian's veins ?  
 Beguiled by error weak,  
 Ye see not—though to pierce so deep ye boast,  
 Who love or faith in venal bosoms seek—  
 When thronged your standards most,  
 Ye are encompassed most by hostile bands.  
 O hideous deluge,<sup>3</sup> gathered in strange lands,  
 That rushing down amain  
 O'erwhelms our every native lovely plain !  
 Alas ! if our own hands  
 Have thus our weal betrayed, who shall our cause sustain ?

Well did kind Nature guardian of our state,  
 Rear her rude Alpine heights,  
 A lofty rampart against German hate ;  
 But blind ambition, seeking his own ill,  
 With ever restless will  
 To the pure gales contagion foul invites.  
 Within the same strait fold  
 The gentle flocks and wolves relentless throng,  
 Where still meek innocence must suffer wrong ;  
 And these—O shame avowed !—

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to the distinguished literary characters (Italians) who had helped him in his work.

<sup>1</sup> The expression echoes the conviction of Dante in his *De Monarchiâ* that Rome was divinely commissioned to rule the world (see Vol. I. p. 391, and below, pp. 301, 302).

<sup>2</sup> P. need not refer, as the translation would imply and as Carducci imagines (p. 22), to any *particular* war, but to a perpetual state of war (" See, Lord, from what light cause *what* cruel war has birth ").

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Vit. Sol.* II. § iv. cap. 3. " Germania . . . e suis nubibus in nostras terras jugem ferreum imbrem pluit " (B. ed. p. 305).

Are of the lawless hordes no tie can hold ;  
 Fame tells how Marius' sword  
 Erstwhile their bosoms gored,  
 Nor has Time's hand aught blurred the record proud !  
 When *he* who, thirsting, stooped to quaff the flood  
 With the cool waters mixed drank of a *foeman's* <sup>1</sup> blood.

Great Cæsar's name I pass, who o'er *wide* <sup>2</sup> plains  
 Poured forth the ensanguined tide  
 Drawn by our own good swards from out their veins ;  
 But now—nor know I what ill stars preside—  
 Heaven holds this land in hate !  
 To you the thanks, whose hands control her helm—  
 You, whose rash feuds despoil  
 Of all the beauteous earth the fairest realm !  
 Are ye impelled by judgment, crime or fate  
 To oppress the desolate ?  
 From broken fortunes and from humble toil  
 The hard-earned dole to wring,  
 While from afar ye bring <sup>3</sup>  
 Dealers in blood, bartering their souls for hire ?  
 In truth's great name I sing  
 Nor hatred nor disdain my earnest lay inspire.

Nor mark ye yet, confirmed by proof on proof,  
*Bavarian trickery* <sup>4</sup>  
*Prompt to surrender*, <sup>5</sup> keeping death aloof ?  
 (Shame worse than aught of loss in honour's eye !)

<sup>1</sup> Lady D. writes "*they* who thirsting" and "*a comrade's* blood." But the word is in the singular, and P. means Marius or the Roman soldier generally. He is following Florus (III. 3) who says that "*the* Roman victor drank of the flood (the River Are), which flowed through the enemy's camp.

<sup>2</sup> The original has *ogni pioggia*, which Lady D. renders "*Our* plains." But Cæsar never drew German blood on Italian soil.

<sup>3</sup> In the original it is "*cercare*" and "*gradire*" (to seek and to accept), "*in disparte*" (from outside).

<sup>4</sup> This stanza is obscure, especially lines 12, 13 ; the opening lines have misled the older commentators into supposing a reference to Louis of Bavaria in 1328. Presumably Lady D. adopts that view ; for she renders "*Bavarico l'inganno*" "*Bavaria's perfidy*," which would imply that Louis is the "*he*" of l. 8, who sets his own glory at naught, and that his is the "*name*," which enforces no laws. But there is no allusion to the Empire here, of whose just rights P. was always the champion ; the "*he*" of l. 8 refers to the German mercenary generally, but not to any individual. L. de Marsili, P.'s friend and contemporary, who wrote the earliest commentary on the Ode (first published in 1863 at Bologna) says that the Bavarians were the first Germans to act as mercenaries in Italy and that King Robert remarked at the time that they would prove her destruction. It may be merely for metrical reasons that P. writes "*Bavarico*" instead of "*Tedesco*," thus by synecdoche putting the part for the whole. For the "*trickery*" see the next note.

<sup>5</sup> Here Lady D. has "*Who strikes in mockery*," which is no rendering of "*Alzando il dito*." The metaphor (as explained by Marsili) is of "*raising the hand*" in token of surrender. The "*trickery*" lay in their pretending to fight for their master, while taking good care of their own

While ye with honest rage devoted pour  
 Your inmost bosom's gore !  
 Yet give one hour to thought,  
 And he shall own how little he can hold  
 Another's glory dear, who sets his own at naught.<sup>1</sup>  
 O Latin blood of old !  
 Arise, and wrest from obloquy thy fame,  
 Nor bow before a name,  
 Of hollow sound,<sup>2</sup> whose power no laws enforce.<sup>3</sup>  
 For if barbarians rude  
 Have higher minds subdued,  
 Ours, ours, the crime ! not such wise Nature's course.

' Ah ! <sup>4</sup> is not this the soil my foot first pressed ?  
 And here, in cradled rest  
 Was not I softly hushed, here fondly reared ?  
 Ah ! is not this my country, so endeared  
 By every filial tie—  
 In whose lap shrouded both my parents lie ? '  
 Oh, by this tender thought  
 Your torpid bosoms to compassion wrought,  
 Look on the people's grief,  
 Who, after God, of you expect relief !  
 And if ye but relent,  
 Virtue shall rouse her in embattled might,  
 Against blind fury bent,  
 Nor long shall doubtful hang the unequal fight ;  
 For no ! the ancient fame  
 Is not extinguished yet, that raised the Italian name.

Mark, sovereign Lords, how time with pinion strong  
 Swift hurries life along ;

skins ; for in their combats there were always more prisoners than killed or wounded. The old commentators understood the " raising of the hand " to mean the act of taking an oath of fealty. A. Caffaro (*Giorn. Storico della Lett. Ital.* t. XXVI. 1895) interprets the metaphor as one of " defiance " ; E. Sicardi (*ibid.* t. XXIX. 1897) rather weakly refers it to the whole combat, though the following words point plainly to surrender. I have not seen the essays on this Canzone by G. Bustelli (1869), L. Fùrnari (1893), E. Proto (1906), C. Steiner (1909), and R. Jorio (1912).

<sup>1</sup> This line is an Alexandrine, which should be reserved for the last of each stanza ; while, curiously enough, the last in this stanza has but ten syllables. These are the only metrical blots on an excellent rendering.

<sup>2</sup> The ancient interpreters (and some moderns as Muratori and Biagioli) see in this an allusion to Louis as " no true Emperor," because proscribed by the Pope. But whether for that reason or his own futility, the Italians never " bowed before his name " at any time when P. was writing at Parma (see st. i. l. 6). The dreaded " name " is the renown of Germans as warriors, or (as Carducci thinks, *op. cit.* p. 113) the high-sounding title of " The Great Company," assumed by the robber band.

<sup>3</sup> Lady D.'s rendering is a mere paraphrase of " senza soggetto " which would mean " unsubstantial." Carducci (p. 113) compares Tasso, *Gier. Lib.* XIV. st. 63, where the poet evidently has this line in mind. The last three lines give the sense admirably.

<sup>4</sup> The following six lines are " the thought " suggested by P. to the rulers of Italy and supposed to be uttered by them.



E'en now, behold ! Death presses on the rear ;  
 We sojourn here a day—the next are gone !  
 The soul disrobed, alone,  
 Must shuddering seek the doubtful pass we fear.  
 Oh, at the dreaded bourne,  
 Abase the lofty brow of wrath and scorn  
 (Storms adverse to the eternal calm on high);  
*And he who penalty*  
*From others would exact by fairer deed*  
 Of heart or hand or genius must aspire <sup>1</sup>  
 To win the honest meed  
 Of just renown—the noble mind's desire.  
 Thus sweet on earth the stay !

Thus to the spirit pure unbarred is Heaven's way !

My song ! with courtesy and numbers sooth  
 Thy daring reasons grace ;  
 For thou the mighty in their pride of place  
 Must woo to gentle ruth,  
 Whose haughty will long evil customs nurse,  
 Ever to truth averse ;  
 Thee better fortunes wait  
 Among the virtuous few, the truly great !  
 Tell them—but who shall bid my terrors cease ?  
 Peace, peace, on thee I call ! return, O Heaven-born peace ! ”

In this splendid Canzone two main motives are clearly discernible—the internal dissensions of Italy (in the first and last stanzas and the envoi) and the employment of German mercenaries by her rulers (in the five stanzas intervening). The first motive might have inspired Petrarch at any moment in his long career ; and we have already seen him affected by it in his first political poem—the letter to Enea Tolomei <sup>2</sup> (1331 or 1332). But the second source of trouble did not become acute till the end of Pope Benedict's reign,<sup>3</sup> when the Ghibelline lords of the north, rising to great wealth and ignoring the feeble Emperor, pursued

<sup>1</sup> The original is :—

“ E quel che'n altrui pena  
 Tempo si spende, in qualche atto più degno  
 O di mano o d'ingegno,”

rendered by Lady D.,

“ Ye, whose cruelty  
 Has sought another's harm, by fairer deed  
 Of heart or hand or intellect aspire.”

There is nothing about “ cruelty ” ; and P., with characteristic tact, does not use the second person plural, when he is imputing blame to the lords whom he is addressing.

<sup>2</sup> *Ep. Metr.* I. iii. (see above, Vol. I. pp. 407, 409).

<sup>3</sup> The first to employ these mercenaries extensively were Mastino della Scala and Luchino Visconti during their successive bids for power (1337-1345).

their personal ambitions by hiring the trained soldiery, whom Louis had disbanded after his Italian expedition. The sympathies of our poet were always Ghibelline in the sense that he considered it the Emperor's duty to keep order in Italy. But he was also a fervent champion of liberty; and if peace could have been preserved in the peninsula by other means, *without Rome having to forfeit her just title to supremacy*, he might perhaps have consented to ignore the rights of "the northern barbarian." He showed this three years later by his eager support of Cola's fantastic scheme for reviving the glories of the Roman republic. After that attempt had ignominiously failed, he turned again to the Emperor (then Charles IV. of Bohemia) and warmly urged him to assert his authority; and when this effort also proved abortive, he again pleaded earnestly with the Pope to return to Italy. Amid all these changes of attitude he was constant to his Italian patriotism and to the indefeasible title of Rome to supremacy.

It is curious that in this noble Canzone there is no allusion to Rome, or to the Emperor or to the Pope; but it is still more curious that its early Italian critics did not see that this omission (apart from the second motive of the poem) renders its date practically certain. It must have been written before Cola reasserted the claims of Rome—at a moment when the Pope was utterly neglecting Italy, and when the Empire was regarded there with general contempt. It was written in the plain of the Po (*i.e.* at Parma) and therefore could have nothing to do with "the Bavarian's" descent upon Italy, when Petrarch was at Avignon. The poet was only twice at Parma before the revolution of Rienzi—from May, 1341 to May, 1342 and from the beginning of 1344 to February, 1345. During his first stay the worst excesses of the mercenaries had not taken place; it must therefore have been written during the latter period—after the outrages<sup>1</sup> committed by "the Great Company."<sup>2</sup>

The two modern theories<sup>3</sup> that it was written after 1350 are excluded not only by the poet's forsaking Parma after that year,

<sup>1</sup> P. is clearly thinking of these in stanzas 2 to 4 and stanza 6.

<sup>2</sup> Differing from Carducci (p. 126) who refers it to the siege of Parma (see n. 2, p. 296, and Chap. XVIII.), I should conjecture that it was written in 1344 at Selva Piana, whence the northern plains of his beloved land lay stretched before him as in a map.

<sup>3</sup> See above, n. 2, p. 295.

but also by two facts which render the dates 1353, 1354, or 1370, highly improbable. During the first period Petrarch was resting all his hopes of peace on the coming of the new Emperor to assume the crown at Rome, and we cannot imagine that he would fail to allude to that event. It was also the time when the Pope had abandoned his neglect of Italy, and was striving through his able legate, Albornozy, to recover some of his lost authority. The date of 1370 is even less conceivable, for during the previous decade Italy had been overrun by English, French, Spanish and Burgundian mercenaries,<sup>1</sup> and the Canzone speaks only of Germans.<sup>2</sup> Nor is it likely that this lyric masterpiece would be composed at the advanced age of sixty-six.<sup>3</sup> Its position in Part I. of the canzoniere between two love-poems,<sup>4</sup> plainly written in 1343-1345, also indicates the date, to which the foregoing arguments irresistibly lead.

Nor need we assume that Petrarch's silence about the Emperor was due to the quarrel between Louis and the Pope, or to the German nationality of the mercenary bands. On that quarrel he has expressed no opinion, perhaps because silence was for him more prudent than speech; and in two later writings, while reproaching Charles IV. for deserting Italy, he candidly admits that for the plague of mercenaries Italy had only herself to thank,<sup>5</sup> and that "the Empire and liberty" were involved in a common ruin by their means.<sup>6</sup> In comparing his political standpoint with that of Dante in the *De Monarchia* Zumbini finds<sup>7</sup> the main

<sup>1</sup> Zumbini, *Studi sul P.* pp. 217-219. It is noteworthy that in his rhetorical apostrophe (*F.* XXIII. I)—hardly to be called a letter—against the later mercenaries P. expressly refers (the date is 1361, September 1) to the various nationalities of which the bands were composed. Cf. "En parva prædonum manus ex mille collecta fornicibus terrarum omnium" (*Frac.* III. 182).

<sup>2</sup> I do not think that l. 29 ("di che deserti strani") tells against this conclusion. Cf. l. 35 ("Tedesca rabbia") and l. 66 ("Bavarico inganno") and the exultation in st. 3 over Marius' defeat of the Teutons.

<sup>3</sup> Zumbini (pp. 217, 218) lays great stress on this point; but we must remember that P.'s splendid Invocation to the Virgin (*C.* xxix) was evidently written in his later middle life, if not in old age.

<sup>4</sup> *C.* XV. ("In quella parte") and *C.* XVII. ("Di pensier in pensier"). No piece in Part I. (*Mestica's* division) certainly belongs to a time later than Laura's death (1348).

<sup>5</sup> As in ll. 31, 32 of the Canzone. Cf. *Vit. Sol.* II. § iv. cap. 3, "Dignum non inficior, quia volentibus accidit." This passage was written after 1355, as is shown by a previous reference to the retreat of Charles IV.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *F.* XXII. 14 (March 30, 1361). "Quid est ergo quod miremur, si apud nos sepultum imperium et libertas oppressa sit" (*Frac.* III. 165).

<sup>7</sup> *Op. cit.* pp. 243, 244.



difference between them in the changed condition of things caused by the removal of the Papacy from Rome, which Petrarch held to be rightful sovereign of the world. But surely the contrast between their respective positions lies deeper. To Dante, brought up amid the license of city-parties, the Empire seemed the sole controlling secular force and Italy a mere geographical expression; to Petrarch—an exile from his boyhood in a foreign land—appeared the dim vision of the coming nation, in which the frontiers of the city-states became blurred, and their rulers seemed responsible for the whole dumb populace, as shepherds for their flocks. It was in the spirit of a detached spectator that he looked down upon the seething mass of Italian discord; and he was groping feebly after a unifying force from within, which might expel the stranger from the sacred soil and restore the Heaven-born gift of peace. It is true that, like Dante, he dreamed of a renovation from the past—of the revived glories of republican or imperial Rome, which had then vanished for ever. Even the range of an inspired Hebrew prophet is limited by his natural temperament and by the inherited conditions of the time. Nevertheless we see in Petrarch the first dawning consciousness of a wider Italian nationhood; and by virtue of this Canzone he has been justly hailed as the first true Italian patriot.<sup>1</sup>

A story told by Villemain<sup>2</sup> illustrates the magic power of the poem even after the lapse of five hundred years. In the middle of the last century, during the struggle for Italian unity, a concert was held in Milan (then under the heel of the Austrian) at which a female performer sang the *Italia mia* with intense feeling before a large assembly. The applause and excitement were indescribable; the Austrian garrison took alarm; and next day the fair songstress found herself in prison. No better example could be given of the sway exercised by genius over a remote posterity, or of the extraordinary “modernity” thrown by the great lyrist over his loftier thought, when he soars above the shackles of his day. “Age cannot wither nor custom stale” the songs that ring with genuine emotion. There is no pedantry,

<sup>1</sup> For works on P.’s patriotism (some of which I have not seen) cf. G. Crescimanno, *L’amor patrio di F. P.* (Turin, 1904); I. del Lungo, *P. e la patria Italiana* (Nuova Antologia t. cxcvii. 1904); B. Mitrovic, *Il patriottismo del P.* (Trieste, 1910); E. Penco, *L’opera patriottica di F. P.* (1904).

<sup>2</sup> *Tableau de la Littérature du Moyen Age*, ii. p. 30, 31. He gives no date, but it must have been between 1840 and 1850.

no lumber of erudition in this Canzone ; yet it could only have been written by a man, whose soul had been nurtured in familiarity with classic models.

It is a descent to turn from these high themes to the sordid policies of the " Trecento." Petrarch's voice was " as of one crying in the wilderness " ; there was no statesman " to answer, nor any that regarded." The urbane Pope averted his gaze from the woes of Italy, and undertook the more congenial task of punishing her German suzerain for defying the Papal ban. Even before his election he had preached a violent sermon against Louis at Paris before the King of France ; and when he became Pope he made it clear to Philip, who had just bound himself by oath to mediate on the Emperor's behalf, that he would be satisfied with nothing short of absolute submission. On April 12, 1343, he published a Bull requiring Louis to abdicate his throne within three months and throw himself on his mercy by appearing personally at Avignon. As usual, the irresolute monarch fluctuated between defiance and surrender. At first he refused to recognize Clement as Pope, and filled benefices, to which the Pope had already appointed, with his own nominees. Then, when the three months' grace had expired, and the three archiepiscopal Electors had been ordered to elect a new Emperor, he sent four envoys <sup>1</sup> to his new ally, Philip, at Paris (September 1, 1343) with instructions to sign any form of " submission " which the King of France might recommend. Philip referred them to the Pope, with the warning that Louis must place himself unreservedly in the Pontiff's hands and accept any penance that might be required of him.<sup>2</sup>

The envoys repaired to Avignon and, when admitted to the consistory on January 16, 1344, had to listen to terms as severe as any conqueror could have imposed on a prostrate enemy, Louis was to acknowledge all his transgressions against Pope John and humbly to solicit pardon ; he was to abjure the tenets

<sup>1</sup> These were his chancellor, Ulric, Humbert, dauphin of Vienne, and the Bishops of Bamberg and Augsburg.

<sup>2</sup> Christophe (ii. 99, 100) represents that the details of " the submission " were suggested by Philip himself and says nothing of the envoys' visit to Avignon. But even though a Papal nuncio may have been present, Clement had not sunk so low as to have his conditions put forward by the King of France. I prefer the account given by Joudou (i. 252) and by Milman (*Latin Christianity*, vii. 457), which appears to rest on a contemporary authority in Baluze (*Miscellanea*, ii. 272, 276).

of Marsilio and the "Spiritual" Franciscans and confess them to be heretical; he was unconditionally to resign the imperial title and admit that he had borne it unlawfully. As acts of penance he was to promise to go on crusade, to build churches and monasteries, and to resign his rights over certain Italian cities to be specified by the Pope. He must humbly entreat Clement to absolve him and restore him to his former state; he must take an oath of fealty to the Pope and promise complete obedience—in short he must hand over himself and all his possessions to the free disposal of his persecutor. Presumably it was implied (though not stated) that if he did all these things, he would be restored to communion and suffered to retain his dignity. New articles were afterwards added, providing that he must declare all his past acts to be invalid; he must swear that he would issue no ordinance as Emperor without the Pope's special permission and that he would induce the States of the Empire to take an oath to the same effect.<sup>1</sup>

The world had never witnessed such an abasement of the secular power before the spiritual; "even Henry IV. at Canossa might have been ashamed" <sup>2</sup> to subscribe to such terms. They implied that the Pope possessed an absolute veto in an Imperial election and that he might dispose of Imperial possessions as he would. Yet the envoys considered that they had authority to sign the procuration, and swore that the Emperor would truly observe it. When they returned to Germany, Louis declared that he would accept any conditions which merely concerned himself personally, but that he could not relinquish the inherent rights of the Empire without the consent of a Diet, which he summoned to meet at Frankfort in the following September. When that assembly met on September 17, 1344, he informed its members that his fate lay in their hands; he was ready to resign his throne, but if they thought it his duty to resist the Pope's demands, he would do so. It was unanimously resolved to send envoys to the Pope, representing that Louis could not fulfil his conditions without violating his oath to the States. When these delegates had delivered their message, they were

<sup>1</sup> I follow Milman here (*loc. cit.*), though he does not state positively whether the envoys agreed to these new articles. I notice in some French authorities (as Mollat, p. 226, who says that Louis actually abdicated) a tendency to minimize the severity of the terms imposed.

<sup>2</sup> Milman (*loc. cit.*).



curtly asked whether they had powers to negotiate, and on their replying in the negative, they were summarily dismissed.

If Clement really desired peace with Louis, he had clearly overreached himself by his excessive demands. Openly he maintained—what was true enough—that Louis was sheltering himself behind the Diet in order to evade the fulfilment of his sworn engagements. But it is probable that the Pope neither expected nor desired any accommodation. He now announced that the time for Bulls was past and that it was necessary to resort to force.<sup>1</sup> But in the realm of material force the Popes were always weakest ; they could only employ it by stirring up strife and by envenoming an opposition which had hitherto been latent. Clement determined to promote by every means in his power (including direct bribery) the immediate election of Charles of Moravia,<sup>2</sup> eldest son of the blind King of Bohemia. He invited the Prince and his father to Avignon in the Lent of 1346.<sup>3</sup> In a Bull of April 13, which recalls the language and spirit of the imprecatory Psalms,<sup>4</sup> he hurled maledictions upon the head of Louis and formally declared the Empire to be vacant. But he was resolved to leave nothing to chance, and therefore extorted the hardest terms from the favoured candidate. On April 22 Charles solemnly swore, in the presence of the Pope and twelve cardinals, that he would rescind all the acts of Louis and would never assail the territories of the Church ; that he would only enter Rome for his coronation and would leave it the same evening ; and that he would ratify his oath within eight days of his election. On the 28th the Pope issued a Bull instructing the Electors to proceed to a new election.

<sup>1</sup> “ Jam non amplius bullis cum Germanis agendum, sed armis ” (Mutius, *Germ. Chron.* t. xxiv.).

<sup>2</sup> If we are to believe the memoirs of his own time left by Charles in manuscript, Clement was thus fulfilling his own prediction. When the Prince had stayed with him (then Cardinal Roziers) at Avignon under Benedict XII. his host told him he would soon be King of the Romans ; Charles replied, “ Before that you will be Pope.”

<sup>3</sup> Christophe (ii. 104) speaks of an earlier visit in August, 1345, quoting Villani (xii. c. 59) ; but this passage really refers to the visit of 1346.

<sup>4</sup> The language, as quoted by Raynaldus, seems modelled on Ps. cix., “ May he be accursed in his going out and coming in ! The Lord strike him with madness and blindness and fury ! May the heavens rain lightning upon him ! . . . May the earth open and swallow him up quick ! May his name be blotted out in his generation, his memory perish from the earth ! May the elements war against him, and his dwelling be desolate ! ”

He had arranged his preliminary measures with extreme care. Of the seven Electors John of Bohemia was the father and Baldwin, Archbishop of Trèves, the great-uncle of the Papal candidate. The certain partisans of Louis were his son, the Marquis of Brandenburg, and Henry, Archbishop of Mainz. By a previous Bull of April 7 the Pope excommunicated and deposed the latter, and substituted Gerlach of Nassau—a youth only twenty years old, thus causing in this prince-bishopric a fierce contest, which lasted eight years. The Elector Palatine of the Rhine was wavering between the two parties and might be considered neutral. The two remaining Electors—the Archbishop of Cologne and the Duke of Saxony—were ready to promise their support “for a consideration”—the former receiving 8000 gold marks, the latter (more extortionate) stipulating for 15,000. The Pope met with much opposition, even at Avignon, in carrying through his cherished scheme. The Gascon cardinals were against the selection of Charles; and their leader, the Cardinal de Comminges, nearly came to blows with Cardinal Talleyrand in consistory—a scandal only prevented by the forcible interposition of the Pope and other cardinals.<sup>1</sup> The King of France gave but a half-hearted support to the Luxemburg candidature<sup>2</sup> and was beginning to doubt the wisdom of his persistent hostility to Louis. But the Pope triumphed over all opposition. The five Electors of his party met at Rense<sup>3</sup> near Coblenz on July 11, 1346, and after declaring the Empire vacant, chose Charles as King of the Romans.

But no sooner had the plot met with apparent success than new difficulties began to thicken around the Pope. In the following month (August 26) the chivalry of France was overthrown on the field of Crécy; the blind King of Bohemia was slain, and his son, the Emperor-elect, only saved himself by precipitate flight. His pretensions were ridiculed in Northern

<sup>1</sup> P. is supposed by de Sade (II. 264) to refer to this scene in the conflict of the two bulls in *Ecl.* VII. 64, 65:

“Ecce duo, obnixi qui sese cornibus urgent,  
Sæpe graves silvis olim excivere tumultus.”

Some say that the dispute took place over the Neapolitan intrigues of Talleyrand.

<sup>2</sup> So Mollat, p. 226. But the candidature was proposed in the interest of France; for Charles's sister, Bonne of Luxemburg, was wife of the Duke of Normandy, Philip's eldest son.

<sup>3</sup> Not “Reims,” as in Fracassetti (*It.* ii. 452).

Germany, where he was known as "the Priests' Emperor"; the Imperial towns of Aix and Cologne shut their gates against him; and an assembly of German princes at Spire, in declaring the election void, denied the Pope's right to provide them with a new Emperor. Charles had to be content with a "hole and corner" coronation at Bonn (November 25) in the presence of a few partisans; and so weak was he in a military sense that the sorely-pressed Philip was now bitterly regretting his cavalier treatment of Louis, to whom he made overtures of close alliance. Clement had grave cause for anxiety in a new grouping of the Powers, which tended to strengthen his old enemy. Louis of Hungary, indignant at the murder of his brother,<sup>1</sup> was threatening Naples—the Pope's special "fief"—with invasion, and in order to safeguard his own kingdom during his absence, cultivated the friendliest relations with his namesake of Germany. Yet despite these untoward circumstances, Clement instigated his minion Charles to attack the Tyrol, and urged the Ghibelline lords of Milan, Verona and Mantua, to send him military succour. They complied, and he proceeded to besiege Meran; but the advance of a German army forced him to retreat upon Trent (March–April, 1347). Here (April 27) he renewed the subservient oath which he had taken to Clement; but the Pope could not vindicate his right to the Empire, which had still to be sustained by the sword.

At this juncture a new claimant to authority suddenly appeared in Rome, professing to wield his power by equal favour of the City and the Church, and basing upon both the most fantastic pretensions ever advanced by a plebeian dreamer. The Tribune Cola at first enjoyed the countenance of the Papacy; but when he proceeded to cite Louis of Bavaria, Charles of Luxemburg and all the German Electors to appear before him in Rome that he might adjudicate upon their quarrel, the potentates of the world (among whom we may rank the Pope) not unnaturally laughed him to scorn. Clement professed to have proof that he was plotting a league with Germany and Hungary to deprive the Holy See of its "fief" of Naples; yet neither power showed the least disposition to take his action seriously. Six weeks before the Tribune's dramatic fall, "the Bavarian," who was preparing an invasion of his rival's kingdom of Bohemia, fell dead of apoplexy during a bear-hunt (October 11, 1347); and his death

<sup>1</sup> See below, Chap. XIX. p. 366.



in full sovereignty, after thirty years of struggle with the Popes, should have warned them that their assumed power over all temporal monarchies could no longer be upheld. A German historian <sup>1</sup> describes him as "the last Emperor who descended to the grave under the ban of the Church, and the last German King in whom the ancient tradition of the Empire still survived."

The sequel of the struggle, though not strictly within the limits of this chapter, may be fitly recorded here. Germany still showed no disposition to accept an Emperor at the Pope's bidding. The partisans of Louis offered the crown to the victorious Edward of England; but his Continental entanglements were becoming so unpopular in his own country that he had the prudence to decline it (May 20, 1348). Then, after agreeing upon a candidate who was afterwards bought over by the other side,<sup>2</sup> the malcontent Electors chose Gunther, Count of Schwarzenburg, who was an able soldier; but his death after a year's interval (June 14, 1349) paved the way for a reconciliation between the contending parties. Charles was at length unanimously chosen; but he had to submit to a new election at Frankfort and to be recrowned at Aix,<sup>3</sup> and therefore the latest encroachment of the Papacy received no German sanction. It is curious that this "Priests' Emperor," who had so cringed to the Holy See, should yet have been the monarch to carry through an electoral constitution, which ignored the loudly asserted rights of the Pope. The famous document, which contains its provisions, is known as "the Golden Bull" and was regarded henceforward as a "fundamental law of the Empire."<sup>4</sup> It was published in the Diets of Nuremberg and Metz in 1355 and 1356, and was therefore in the Emperor's mind, if not actually promulgated, at the time of his inglorious coronation in Italy in the former year. Its avowed object was the avoidance of disputed elections, with their invariable consequence of civil war; for by exactly specifying the seven members of the Electoral College and defining their functions, privileges and prerogatives, it diminished the danger both of intestine strife and external

<sup>1</sup> Gregorovius (Eng. trans.), Vol. VI. pt. i. p. 343.

<sup>2</sup> Frederick, Marquis of Misnio, son-in-law of Louis.

<sup>3</sup> It is curious that these facts are omitted or glossed over by all the Roman Catholic historians, as Christophe, André, Joudou, and Mollat.

<sup>4</sup> Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire* (1892), p. 230. He also says (p. 225) that it became the corner-stone of the Germanic Constitution.

interference. The details of an election and of the procedure during an interregnum are all carefully settled, but from beginning to end there is not a word concerning Rome or Italy or the Pope. The new claims of the Papacy put forward in the Bulls of Clement V. (1314) <sup>1</sup> are not formally denied, but they are tacitly ignored; and in an instrument of such a character this was equivalent to pronouncing them null and void. Clement's successor, Innocent, made a feeble protest <sup>2</sup>; but the support of the Emperor at the time was so vital to him that he forbore to press it. If the contents of the Bull were ever known to Petrarch, <sup>3</sup> he would scarcely have taken patiently its neglect of the rights of the Eternal City.

Reverting once more to the Italian policy of Clement VI., we must regard it as vitiated by one cardinal error. He failed to see that the death of Robert and the succession of a female sovereign (a minor) at Naples produced a wholly new orientation of political power. For years Robert had helped to maintain a sort of order in Rome, and had always been in cordial relations with Florence, the focus of Italian liberty. His death removed a valuable counterpoise to the ambitions of the rival despots in the north. Ghibellinism, considered as a prop to the declining Empire, had scarcely survived the ignominious retreat of Louis; but it was raising its head in a new form, no less perilous to the cause of order and liberty. The Italians, whether Guelfs or Ghibellines, felt no interest in the vindictive arraignment of "the Bavarian"; to all parties it meant no more than the flogging of a dead horse. The Ghibelline despots, if they had the funds, could now procure German mercenaries without invoking their nominal sovereign; the Guelf republics felt their freedom under a perpetual menace, yet saw no chance of effective help from a French Pope. Indeed at this very time Florence fell into disgrace with Clement for interfering with "benefit of clergy"

<sup>1</sup> See above, Vol. I. p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> Mollat (p. 228) and Gregorovius (Vol. VI. Pt. ii. p. 389) both mention this protest without recording its exact terms; Christophe, André, and Joudou altogether ignore the "Golden Bull." Milman, however (VIII. 7), expressly says that Innocent raised no protest.

<sup>3</sup> The "Golden Bull," which was presented as a curiosity to P. by the Bishop of Olmütz in 1357, seems to have been only a replica of the metal capsule attached to this or some other edict (the original "Bulla"). See *F.* XXI. 2, 5, where P., in referring to it, makes no allusion to the edict itself.

and for expelling a rapacious Inquisitor, who levied blackmail upon private citizens. This, however, was a matter of administration rather than of policy, and both sides made timely concessions.<sup>1</sup> But the Guelf city took serious alarm at the Pope's open support of Charles of Luxemburg for the imperial throne; she could not forget that both his father and his grandfather had been enemies of the Republic. She beheld Clement conferring "vicariates" upon the northern lords in return for large subsidies and doing absolutely nothing to restrain their aggressive schemes. We shall see in the next chapter<sup>2</sup> how Parma was bought and sold twice over and subjected to a long siege without a word of protest from the Pope; and yet he was supposed to possess feudal rights over its territory. Although he took so much money out of Italy, his own States were no better governed than their neighbours, and as likely to be wrecked by domestic strife and foreign brigandage. Everywhere power seemed to be divorced from responsibility; and the result was unbridled licence and the oppression of the poor by the rich.

The latter part of the period we are considering was a time of popular distress, and even of famine. The autumn of 1345 and the following spring were marked by excessive rains, with the natural consequence that the harvest of 1346 was a failure. Within a year the prices of corn, wine, and oil were more than doubled in Italy; and although the Florentine government made great efforts to purchase wheat in Sardinia, Calabria, and Tunis, the scarcity was so general that not half its purchases came to hand.<sup>3</sup> In April, 1347, no fewer than 94,000 persons in Florence were receiving bread from the State, and less wealthy communities with an inferior organization must have suffered far more in proportion. Yet we hear of no special measures by the absentee Curia in Avignon to cope with the distress at Rome, and in the Papal States. Had a Legate been appointed and amply provided with money, many lives might have been saved. But the Papal Treasury was not wont to do anything for nothing. Legates were an expensive luxury, chiefly to those whom they visited;

<sup>1</sup> Two embassies were sent to Avignon to effect an arrangement on these matters; and Clement was compelled in justice to suspend the offending Inquisitor.

<sup>2</sup> See Chap. XVIII. pp. 341-354.

<sup>3</sup> Sismondi, *Hist. des Rep. Ital.* VI. 243-245.



they had to be generously paid, and their maintenance provided by the province to which they were assigned.

We find an instance of prejudice against them for this reason in the earlier affairs of Naples, to which we must now return. As already stated, several months of Joan's reign passed away before Clement gave any sign of dissatisfaction with the Regency Council established by Robert's Will. But towards the end of the summer of 1343, impelled, perhaps, by the report of the Hungarian envoys, he intimated that he might send a Legate—a resolution which he formally announced by letter on November 28. He declared that the late King had no right to constitute such a Council,<sup>1</sup> and that its powers would be suspended on the arrival of the Legate, who was to be, as in the previous year, his own relative Aimeric, Cardinal of St. Martin. At the first hint of this measure (September 5) Queen Joan wrote to the Pope, entreating him not to send a Legate. She may have feared that the latter would act in the Hungarian interest and subject her Court to a strict surveillance; but she was probably writing, as in other letters of this period, merely as a mouthpiece of her Council, who were aware that the Legation would be an unpopular measure. The Legate would expect to be handsomely rewarded; his administration would be costly and would involve an increase of taxation. In fact this particular Legate was not too modest in his demands. He arrived in May, 1344, and left in February, 1345; and for this nine months' service, besides board and lodging for himself and his suite, he eventually received 19,000 gold florins.<sup>2</sup>

What were Clement's reasons for this measure? He must have seen through the schemes of the Queen of Hungary (now again at Naples) and was aware that they were not in accord with his own policy. He may have suspected the Council of prodigality and of weakness in dealing with cabals at court; he certainly distrusted Queen Sancia, who was notoriously under the influence of the "Observant" Friars. But his chief motive was probably a desire for more active intervention in the conduct of affairs. He had already, to the displeasure of the Council,

<sup>1</sup> Yet in a later brief of January 14, 1345, he describes the King's will as "legitimate" (Baddeley, *Robert the Wise*, p. 298). For the exact sequence of events in 1343 I owe much to this book.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Baddeley (p. 333) describes this sum as equivalent to 3800 ounces of gold, at five florins to the ounce.

abrogated one provision of the Will in the matter of the Princess Maria's marriage ; and there was another in which he had also interfered, so far without success.

There was a clause in the Will directing that, on the day of Robert's decease, all criminals should be released, except highway robbers and certain prisoners who were undergoing punishment for serious offences against the State. In the last category were included three brothers named Pipini, who had held considerable lands in Apulia and had so conducted themselves as to become a scourge to the countryside. The eldest, Giovanni, was Count of Minorbino, and, in right of his mother, Palatine of Altamura ; the others were Ludovico, Count of Potenza, and Pietro, Count of Vico. These men had been little better than bandits, who kept armed men in their pay and employed them to wreak their private grudges upon other noble families. At length, in 1341, Robert was compelled to send a powerful force against them, which confined them to their stronghold of Minorbino ; and the siege was only raised on their promising to repair to Naples and make their defence upon the charges brought against them. They were then, after a fair trial, sentenced to lose their estates, and suffer imprisonment for life in the Castello Capuano.<sup>1</sup> Their property was divided between several Court functionaries, of whom one was Niccolo d'Alife, the acquaintance of Petrarch.

After the King's death the prisoners' mother, the Countess of Altamura, appealed to the Council for their release, and on meeting with a refusal, persuaded <sup>2</sup> Cardinal Colonna at Avignon to use his influence with the Pope on their behalf. Being probably ignorant of their real character, he took up their cause with extreme warmth and induced Clement to intercede for them with the Queen. Letters were sent on July 10, 1343, to Joan and Sancia, requesting them to consider the case favourably, " yet

<sup>1</sup> De Sade (ii. 148, 150) speaks of this as " the castle at Capua," which is fifteen miles north of Naples ; and he is followed by Campbell (*Life of P. I.* 253) and even by Mr. Baddeley in his first work (p. 42, n.). The " Castello Capuano " was one of the four mediæval fortresses in Naples itself ; it was near the great market and is now called " La Vicaria."

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Baddeley (p. 294) says that she " bribed " the Cardinal ; but this seems to be conjecture, for he gives no proof. The Pipini family were originally respectable and may have befriended old Stefano Colonna during his wanderings in the south. The brothers, when liberated and employed by Louis of Hungary, espoused the cause of the barons at Rome against Rienzi.

with proper regard to law and justice.” The reply sent in Joan’s name contained a polite refusal, alleging the desperate wilfulness of these malefactors and the full inquiry that had originally been made into their crimes. The Pope, plainly nettled at this rebuff, wrote a second appeal, couched in argumentative terms, in which he instanced the acquittal of the Pipini’s mother and the restoration of her property, and maintained, with scant success, that the “act of grace,” extended to prisoners in Robert’s Will, covered the case of her sons. The Cardinal decided to send an express messenger with a personal appeal and chose Petrarch, as one well acquainted with the Neapolitan Court, to undertake this service. It is even possible that the poet was the bearer of the Pope’s second missive ; for he must have started within a fortnight of its official date (August 28).



## CHAPTER XVIII

### MISSION TO NAPLES AND RESIDENCE IN NORTHERN ITALY (1343-1345)

PETRARCH was thus not an accredited envoy of the Pope,<sup>1</sup> but rather a diplomatic agent—ostensibly sent by Cardinal Colonna for a special purpose, but employed also to watch and report upon the state of affairs at Naples. At the Cardinal's request he consented, as in 1337, to take the quicker sea-route as far as Civita Vecchia—the port of Rome<sup>2</sup>; but this time he embarked on a coasting ship, not at Marseilles but at Nice,<sup>3</sup> whither he would journey by land through Apt in four or five days. At Nice the weather was unpropitious; and with the wind setting on shore he was thoroughly drenched by the surf, apparently in being rowed out to the vessel.<sup>4</sup> By the time the stars came out they had only reached Monaco, where the captain timidly anchored for the night. With a southerly wind this, too, is an exposed roadstead; and the next day was too stormy for them to proceed. The poet—always an extremely bad sailor—suffered severely, even though in port, and began to be enraged at the delay<sup>5</sup>; and when next day, in

<sup>1</sup> In *Ep. Metr.* II. xvi. 1, 2 (to Rinaldo da Villafranca, 1344) he speaks of himself as—

“Nuper ab ætherii, qui temperat astra, Tonantis  
Missus habente vices”;

but this grandiloquent description of his mission as “Papal” need not be taken too literally.

<sup>2</sup> See below for the Cardinal's preparations for his comfort in Rome (*F. V.* 2).

<sup>3</sup> P. calls it “Nicæa Vari” (on or near the Var)—a designation apparently not classical. The Var, which enters the sea four miles west of Nice, was considered under the Empire as the boundary between Gaul and Italy. Nice, as an ancient colony of Massilia, was always rather debateable land; but in P.'s time it was reckoned as Italian, though in the last century it became French.

<sup>4</sup> We learn from *Sen.* XV. 7 (*Frac.*) that he and his copy of the *Confessions* (again carried about his person) were “sub fluctibus” at Nice. Fracassetti (*Lett. Sen.* ii. 426) translates “a fondo del mare”; but the words need only mean that they were badly splashed.

<sup>5</sup> “Irasci tacitus cæpi” (*F. V.* 3).

very rough weather, they could only crawl along to Porto Maurizio, where they again anchored, he determined to go on shore and get some much needed food and rest. It was too late to enter the town, but he obtained rough lodgings at a sailors' hostelry on the quay, where he could "nurse his wrath and watch the gambols of the waves."<sup>1</sup> In the morning he decided to proceed by land, with one servant; "the breach of my promise," he tells the Cardinal, "was both useful to you and almost a necessity for me." So re-embarking his heavy baggage and his other attendants, he was luckily able to buy two strong and swift German nags, with which he continued his journey. He must have passed through Savona and Genoa but of this part of the road he says nothing.

Riding along the lovely Riviera di Levante, he had almost reached Avenza, when he found his way barred by the rival forces of Milan and Pisa, which might be expected at any moment to engage.<sup>2</sup> He therefore retraced his steps to Lerici,<sup>3</sup> on the eastern side of the Gulf of Spezzia, where he found a boatman willing to take his party (and apparently his horses) by sea beyond the danger-zone. They were rowed past the black cliff called "Corvo" at the entrance of the gulf and the adjacent "White Rock," past the mouth of the River Magra and the deserted site of Luni, and were landed at Motrone<sup>4</sup> behind the Pisan camp. It was a row of eight or ten miles, and the weather seems to have been fair. From Motrone he rode through Pisa to Siena, leaving Florence on his left; and at this point, for some unexplained reason, he diverged from the direct road through Viterbo to Rome, preferring the route by way of Perugia to Todi, where was a house of some Cistercians of Clairvaux, who

<sup>1</sup> "Indignari altius et ludos maris agnoscere" (*ibid.*).

<sup>2</sup> For this war see above, Chap. XVII. p. 291. Shortly after there was a battle at Rotaia, in which the Pisans were beaten. According to P. the struggle was on a point of "pride" (the "fastibus" of the Paris Colbertin MS. is far better than Fracassetti's "fascibus," I. 254), not of territory; and this was certainly true of Luchino Visconti. But the war had been fomented by his brother-in-law, Malespini, Bishop of Luni, who had a territorial feud with Pisa. In saying that the Apennines were Milan's "natural" boundary, if it despised the "historical" limit of the Po, P. is giving the Pisan view.

<sup>3</sup> It is a mystery how P.'s classical nomenclature is so correct. Ptolemy calls Lerici "Portus Ericis," but P. could not read Ptolemy. See the *Africa*, Lib. VI. 857-866 and *F.* III. 22 (Frac. I. 192).

<sup>4</sup> Apparently north of Massa, which was not taken till April 5, 1344 (Muratori, *Annali d'Italia*, sub anno).

acknowledged the Cardinal as their patron.<sup>1</sup> Some of the monks accompanied him twenty miles to Narni, whence he posted on to Rome, arriving there late on Saturday, October 4. He continues in his letter to the Cardinal<sup>2</sup>:

“ I thought I ought to visit your noble father before I retired to rest. Good God ! I never saw such dignity of face and words and bearing, such force of mind and strength of body, at an age so advanced ! I seemed to behold Julius Cæsar or Africanus, except that he is far older than either ; and yet he looked just the same as he was twelve years ago when I first saw him at Avignon. It is a standing marvel that this one man does not age, while Rome herself grows old ! I had found him half undressed and ready for bed ; but he made fatherly enquiries about you and your affairs, reserving further talk till the morrow, which I spent entirely in his company, with scarcely a pause in our converse.”

From an earlier missive<sup>3</sup> we learn that without his knowledge the Cardinal had requested his family in Rome to welcome and befriend his envoy, so that Petrarch, with warm expressions of thanks to his patron, tells him that he has been received more “ as an angel ” than as an ordinary visitor. He remained at Rome till the Tuesday morning (October 7) ; and his veteran host insisted, despite his protest, in riding with him beyond the walls. That night he passed in the family headquarters at Palestrina, as the guest of Giovanni, son<sup>4</sup> of Stefano the younger ; and before leaving the town next day, he had a last interview<sup>5</sup> with his aged and gouty friend, Colonna di San Vito, who was spending his declining years at the Franciscan Convent at Tivoli, not far away. He was glad to find the old man cheerful and tranquil, and to receive his assurance that, thanks to Petrarch’s counsel,<sup>6</sup> he was learning to bear his ills uncomplainingly and to await death without terror. Three or four days later (October

<sup>1</sup> De Sade gives no authority for his statement (II. 142 n.) that the Cardinal held the monastery “ in commendam.”

<sup>2</sup> *F. V.* 3.

<sup>3</sup> *F. V.* 2 (quoted above, Vol. I. p. 298).

<sup>4</sup> He praises this youth warmly in *F. XIX.* 4 (to the Emperor Charles IV.) and in *F. XX.* 13 (to Lælius), where he calls him “ Ascanius.” See above, Vol. I. p. 441.

<sup>5</sup> See *F. XXIII.* 12, of 1359, to Guido Sette (*Frac. III.* 221). P. adds that his old friend died very shortly after his visit.

<sup>6</sup> See above, Vol. I. pp. 419, 453, and the letter at the end of Chap. XIII, pp. 101–103.



10 or 11) our poet must have arrived at Naples; and his portrait of a "Spiritual" mendicant at Court, though rather over-coloured, deserves textual quotation:

"I was introduced to the Queens, and was present at their Council. Oh, shame! What a monster I found there! May God deliver the Italian clime from such a pest! I knew that Christ was contemned at Memphis and Babylon and Mecca; but in truth, my noble Naples, I pity you for having become as one of these! No sign of devotion or truth or good faith! I beheld a horrid creature on three legs, barefooted and cowed, exulting in poverty, yet enervated by vice—a mannikin hairless and rubicund, with bloated limbs scarce covered by a seedy cloak, and purposely exposing much of his body—such a figure insolently despising not only your appeal but that of the Pope, as from the lofty pinnacle of his own sanctity. No marvel—his arrogance is based upon gold; for according to common report his hoard and his cloak are in utter discordance. His venerable name, let me tell you, is Roberto.<sup>1</sup> In place of Robert our late serene King, the unique glory of our time, this Robert has arisen to its eternal disgrace. Henceforth I shall be less slow to believe that a serpent can be born from a dead man's marrow, since this deaf viper has emerged from the royal tomb. Is this fellow a fit successor to so great a King? After the Dionysii and Agathocles and Phalaris, has fate reserved for 'the Sicilian court' one more ill-omened and (though secretly) more inhuman than them all—in the words of Macrobius 'an oppressor most savage'<sup>2</sup>? Here is one who, with a new kind of tyranny, puts on no diadem or purple or arms, but a squalid mantle—and even that, as I said, not entire, but more than half tucked up—a man bent more by hypocrisy than age, who trusts more to his taciturnity than his eloquence. The fellow struts through the Queen's palace with haughty brow, leaning on his staff; he crushes the weak, spurns and violates all right, human and divine, and like a second Tiphys or Palinurus,<sup>3</sup> steers the quivering bark of State, which will soon, in my opinion, become an awful wreck. For there are many—nay, they are nearly all—of the same kidney; one only, Philippe, Bishop of Cavaillon, takes the part of abandoned justice. Yet what can a single

<sup>1</sup> This Franciscan was Roberto da Mileto, who had been some years confessor to the Prince-Consort Andrew. He was not a Hungarian (as in Reeve, p. 96), but an Italian, and probably appointed by Queen Sancia, by whom he was paid in gold for special services (Baddeley, pp. 241, 266).

<sup>2</sup> "Inclementissimus incubator (aulæ Siculæ)"—a term applied by Macrobius (Comm in *Somn. Scip.* I. x. 16), to the tyrant Dionysius.

<sup>3</sup> Tiphys was the helmsman of Jason in the Argo, Palinurus of Æneas.

lamb do in such a pack of wolves—unless he were to flee at once, if he can, and return to his fold? And this, I fancy, is his resolve; but he is withheld by the double chain of pity for the tottering realm and a recollection of the King's dying entreaty. Meantime, so far as one voice can make itself heard among the senseless band of courtiers by appealing to faith in God and man, he opposes the schemes of villains; and while his authority restrains men's impudence and his wisdom foils the tricks of Fortune, he pits his own shoulder against the public ruin, which he may retard but cannot avert. May it leave him scatheless when it comes! It seems to be so threatening that I have no hope from human aid—at least while this Roberto lives; for he, both by his pre-eminence in treachery and the novelty of his garb, deserves the chief place among the monstrosities of the Court. You will certainly be blamed, unless you inform the Pope on the points upon which I wrote at length in my more confidential letters.<sup>1</sup> Tell him this at least in my own words. Since, in my opinion, the remonstrances of the Apostolic See would have been received with more reverence by the Saracens at Susa or Damascus than at Christian Naples, I should add—with all due respect for his Holiness—the saying of Cicero, 'We are rightly served.'<sup>2</sup> For if we had not suffered the crimes of many to go unpunished, the licence of one would never have risen to such a height. . . .

"Three or four times, I think, I have seen your friends, after obtaining admission to their prison in the Castello Capuano. Their hopes are wholly centred in yourself, since the justice of their cause, which ought to have been their chief safeguard, has so far proved their undoing; nothing is so perilous as to have a just cause before an unjust judge. Besides, none is so deadly a foe to a poor wretch as the man who has despoiled him of his property; he wants him out of the way for fear of being some day called to account. For cruelty always attends upon avarice; and it is notorious that men find the greatest peril to their life in the quarter where they have lost their patrimony. It is a hard lot where it is neither safe to be poor nor possible to become rich; yet that is exactly the case of your captive friends. There is hardly anyone who has not some share in their spoils.<sup>3</sup> When will a grasping brigand consult the freedom and

<sup>1</sup> This implies that P. was expected to make an official report to the Cardinal, but not, as Fracassetti supposes (*Adnot.* p. 96), directly to the Pope.

<sup>2</sup> Cicero, *De Amic.* cap. 22.

<sup>3</sup> This, as P. says, was a measure of doubtful wisdom, for which the King was responsible. Among the "beneficiaries" was Raimondo del Balzo, Marshal of the kingdom (who had married one of the family at feud with the Pipini), Niccolo d'Alife (not indicated specially here as in

safety of another, as long as he sees it to mean his own impoverishment? It would have been safer for your friends to have had nothing; for their own grave losses procured them active enemies. I saw them in chains—what an indignity! and how fickle and headlong is Fortune's wheel! And yet, in all the horror of their captivity, nothing can be more lofty than the captives' spirit. While you live, they cherish the highest hopes; yet I see no ground for hope, unless some superior power should intervene. If they expect clemency from the Council, all is over with them; they will perish in their squalid dungeon. The elder Queen—once the royal consort, now the unhappiest of widows—pities them, she says, but is sure she can do no more. 'Cleopatra and her Ptolemy'<sup>1</sup> might display some pity, if 'Pothinus and Achillas'<sup>2</sup> would allow it. This is what I see—how sadly, I will not say, But what can I do? I am following orders and waiting patiently for a reply, though sure of the reply that I shall get.

“*Naples, November 29th.*”<sup>3</sup>

Petrarch, as we shall see, probably left Naples without receiving the long-expected answer to his appeal. The Council may have been unwilling to mortify the envoy, and still further alienate his employers at Avignon, by a categorical refusal; but at the moment they were in no mood to increase their anxieties by setting such dangerous criminals at liberty. Within a few days they were to learn that the Papal Legate had received his commission and would soon appear to take over the administration. In fact he did not reach Naples till the following May (1344); but the mere threat of his coming was enough to modify the just opposition of Andrew and the Hungarian party to the Baddeley, pp. 303, 305), Egidio di Bevania (a witness to the Will), and Gasso, Count of Terlizzi.

<sup>1</sup> Joan and Andrew. The comparison is peculiarly apt, because Cleopatra claimed to be the reigning Queen, and her relations with her consort were consequently strained. P. probably means no reflexion on the morals of the Queen of Naples.

<sup>2</sup> The eunuch, Pothinus (not, as Frac. I. 259, “Photinus”), guardian of the young Ptolemy, is of course Fra Roberto; and Achillas (commander of the Egyptian troops) is Raimondo del Balzo. Both plotted against Cæsar (who may stand for the Pope), and his position was not secure till they had been removed; the inference is obvious. One wonders whether the Cardinal was scholar enough to appreciate the parallel. P.'s authorities are the later books of Lucan's *Pharsalia* and Hirtius' *De Bello Alexandrino*, with neither of which the Cardinal would have been familiar.

<sup>3</sup> This date is almost certainly wrong; for the next letter which refers to this as already sent, is dated November 23. I should conjecture XIII. Kal, Decembr (November 19) for III. Kal.



liberation of the Pipini. They might argue that the Legate would be sure to release the prisoners on his arrival, and that it would be good policy to conciliate them by forestalling his clemency. The Pipini were certainly set free in the following spring or early summer; but whether the event was before or after the Legate's coming is not known. It is at least clear that these restless spirits became zealous supporters of the Hungarian claims, and thus directly contributed to the "tragedy of Aversa,"<sup>1</sup> which we shall relate in the next chapter. Petrarch always speaks of Andrew in terms of praise<sup>2</sup>; but he seems to have had no suspicion of the network of intrigue, which was even now entangling the unhappy lad and bringing his interests into conflict with those of his royal consort.

Meanwhile the poet was becoming galled at the tedious suspense and could not settle down to his normal employments of reading and writing. The contrast between the Naples of three years before, when he was Robert's honoured guest, and the city as he now saw it filled him with grief; he compares it to the difference between broad day and the blackest night.<sup>3</sup> He wanted to kill time by making an excursion to Brindisi and the Adriatic coast<sup>4</sup>; but Queen Sancia advised him not to go so far afield, as his presence might be needed in Naples to forward the object of his mission. He therefore wrote an appeal in verse<sup>5</sup> to his friend Barbato at Capua to bear him company on a shorter excursion in the environs of Naples. He says he is quite content with a distant view of Vesuvius—the volcano which had overwhelmed Pliny with its ashes<sup>6</sup>—and of the island of Capri, which the rough bay renders difficult of approach. He proposes instead an excursion to the west, which was to include Virgil's tomb, Puteoli, Baiæ, Cumæ and the Lucrine and Avernian lakes. His friend, who was living at Capua, eagerly accepted

<sup>1</sup> The chronicler, Domenico Gravina (cap. 9, ed. Naples, 1890), says that Andrew's liberation of the Pipini was his "destruction." This chronicle, written long after the event, is full of patent errors and tainted with the writer's Hungarian sympathies.

<sup>2</sup> "Puer alti animi" (F. V. 6). "Mitissimus, innocentissimus homo" (F. VI. 5).

<sup>3</sup> *Ep. Metr.* II. vii. 7, 8, 19, 20.

<sup>4</sup> F. V. 4 (Frac. I. 260).

<sup>5</sup> *Ep. Metr.* II. vii.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* l. 34, "Obruit infaustâ Plinii dum membra favillâ" (Rossetti, II. 16). (The folio editions read *Pleiadum* for the third and fourth words!) The most recent eruption of Vesuvius had been in 1306.

the invitation, which was extended to their common friend, the Chamberlain Barili. We have two accounts of the trip—in a duty-letter to the Cardinal<sup>1</sup> and in a verse-epistle of the following year to Rinaldo da Villafranca.<sup>2</sup> All the places named lay close together and were visited in a single day<sup>3</sup> (Sunday, November 23); but the friends seem to have stayed the night at Baiæ, for the long letter to the Cardinal is dated from that place. It contains only a summary of Petrarch's experiences—not an orderly recital of the day's events. It was originally written away from books, and though perhaps retouched for publication, it shows how his mind was steeped in memories of the classic past.

“ . . . The companionship of my friends, the variety of famous things we saw and the many previous days of gloom combined to make this one of the happiest days of my life. We have seen that bay, so delightful in the winter months, which under the summer sun, I imagine, is unbearably hot. I speak only from conjecture, for I have never been here in the summer. Three years ago I passed these shores in midwinter, with a northerly gale roaring behind me. It is a great thralldom to travel by sea at that time of year; and so I obtained no near view of many things that I longed to see. But to-day the wish of my heart—warm from my youth and inflamed by the very brief experience of that voyage—has been gratified to the full. I have seen the places described by Virgil,<sup>4</sup> . . . the Lucrine lake and lake of Avernus,<sup>5</sup> the stagnant marsh of the Acheron,<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *F. V.* 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ep. Metr.* II. xvi.

<sup>3</sup> *Ep. Metr.* II. vii. 37, 64, 65.

<sup>4</sup> I omit the passage about Homer (not contained in the Colbertin MS.) which is plainly a later “patch.” P. says on the authority of Servius (on *Æn.* VI. 107) that Ulysses also made his descent into hell from the cave at Avernus.

<sup>5</sup> The Lucrine lake was of salt water—the innermost part of the bay of Baiæ. It was separated very early from the rest of the bay by a volcanic dyke, six stadia in length, which was mythically ascribed to Hercules. On the land side it was parted by only a narrow space from the fresh-water lake of Avernus, which occupies the basin of an extinct crater—now bare, but once surrounded by woods. It was from a cave on the south side of this lake (now called the “Grotto di Sibilla”) that Ulysses and Æneas were fabled to have visited the infernal regions. In P.'s day the Lucrine lake was of much the same size as in ancient times; it is now “but a puddle” (Addison's *Travels in Italy*, 1753, p. 134) owing to a volcanic eruption in 1538; which contracted it and threw up the heap of cinders, now called Monte Nuovo.

<sup>6</sup> What was shown to P. as “the marsh of Acheron” was probably the Lago di Fusaro between Cumæ and Cape Misenum. Yet Virgil's

the swimming-pool of Augusta through the cruelty of her luckless son,<sup>1</sup> the pathway of Caligula—proudly constructed but now sunk beneath the waves<sup>2</sup>—and the curb laid upon the sea by Julius Cæsar.<sup>3</sup> I have seen the country<sup>4</sup> and home of the Sibyl—that awesome cave, from which fools never return, but which the more learned never enter. I have seen the Falernian mount, renowned for its famous vines<sup>5</sup>; on one side the dry earth, constantly emitting steam beneficial to disease, and on the other heaps of ashes, sending forth bubbling whirlpools like ‘a boiling caldron’<sup>6</sup> with a confused noise. I have seen rocks dripping everywhere with medicinal water, and baths suited by Mother Nature’s gift to all sorts of complaints, afterwards mixed up—so men say—by the jealousy of physicians.<sup>7</sup> Yet to these baths even now there is a vast concourse of both sexes and all ages from neighbouring towns. I have seen not only “the Neapolitan crypt,”<sup>8</sup> mentioned by Seneca in his letter to Lucilius,<sup>9</sup> but also the mountains pierced on all sides and hanging over

“tenebrosa palus Acheronte refuso” (*Æn.* VI. 107) was identified by some of the ancients with Avernus or the Lucrine lake.

<sup>1</sup> The “piscina Augustæ” refers to the abortive attempt of Nero to murder his mother, Agrippina, by having the bolts of her ship withdrawn between Baiæ and Bauli. P. seems wrongly to identify this with the “Acheron marsh”; but that may not really be his meaning. Why he should call Nero “infelix”—unless from his subsequent fate—is not clear.

<sup>2</sup> He refers to the bridge of boats constructed by Caligula in A.D. 39, between Puteoli on the east side of the bay and a point between Baiæ and Bauli on the west. It was built of baulks of timber, laid upon the boats and flagged with stone, and was about two Roman miles long. It was a temporary structure and was soon demolished, because the boats were needed; and therefore P.’s assertion that he had “seen” it is surprising. But in a later letter (*Ep. Metr.* III. iv. 41, of 1347) he says that sailors can still detect the remains of the bridge “beneath the deep.”

<sup>3</sup> This probably refers to the dyke of the Lucrine lake (famous for its oysters), which the oyster-contractors induced Cæsar to repair (Servius on *Georg.* ii. 161). P. may, however, be alluding to the work of Agrippa in making a harbour of the Lucrine lake and connecting it by canal with the sea and with Avernus. In honour of his patron’s family he called it the “Julius Portus,” and thus it came to be ascribed to Cæsar.

<sup>4</sup> The “patria” is evidently the ruins of Cumæ, where the cave of the Sibyl was once shown; but although there are still remains of a cave on the east face of the hill of Cumæ, P. means by the “domus” the Grotto di Sibilla on Avernus, which he supposed to lead to the bowels of the earth (see below).

<sup>5</sup> P. apparently supposes (from a misunderstanding of Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* XIV. 6, 8) that the Falernian vine was grown on Mt. Gaurus (now Monte Barbaro above Avernus) instead of in the north of Campania.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Virgil, *Æn.* VII. 463.

<sup>7</sup> He is apparently attacking the incompetence of contemporary doctors.

<sup>8</sup> The Grotto (or tunnel) of Pausilippo. See above, Chap. XIV. p. 129.

<sup>9</sup> *Moral Epistles*, 57 (Lib. VI. 5, § 1).



marble arches that shine a brilliant white, with directions carved and notices explaining which water suits particular parts of the body.

"I am amazed quite as much by the works of art as by the natural scenery. Now I wonder less at the walls, the citadels, the palaces of Rome, since so far from home (though to the best men every land is home) the leading Romans took just as much pains; for to them their winter pleasure-resorts, even beyond the hundredth milestone,<sup>1</sup> had become almost suburban. In summer they had Tibur, Fucinus, and the leafy Apennine vales, 'Cininus' lake with its mount' (as Virgil calls it), the sunny retreats of Umbria, the shady hills of Tusculum and Algidus (so named from its coolness) with its fresh springs and bright streams; in winter they had Antium, Anxur, Formiæ, Caieta, Naples.<sup>2</sup> But no resort was pleasanter or more crowded than Baiæ, as the writers of that time and the vast mural remains plainly testify. I am well aware that it was an abode fitter for human pleasure than for the old Roman severity. And so not only Marius—a man naturally of rougher mould—but Pompey and Cæsar, whose character was of a higher type, are praised<sup>3</sup> for building their villas in this district on the hills, from which—as became them—not plunged in enervating luxuries but withdrawn above them, they could loftily look down on the seaside clamour and pleasure of Baiæ. The incomparable Scipio Africanus—a man engrossed in virtue, never in pleasure—decided by a resolve in keeping with his whole career rather to ignore than to despise a spot so foreign to his character. And so he retired out of sight of it and chose to live not at Baiæ, but at Liternum—a villa, which I know was not far off<sup>4</sup> and which I should have viewed more eagerly than all, if I could have found a guide to a place ennobled by so great a denizen. For of all the marvels of creation God, the sole wonder-worker, has made nothing more marvellous than man."

To enforce this sentiment Petrarch goes on to say that the chief marvel which he saw that day was Maria, the youthful Amazon of Pozzuoli (Puteoli). His description is too long to be quoted in full; but he relates that this maiden willingly

<sup>1</sup> Baiæ was considerably beyond this limit, being 141 miles from Rome.

<sup>2</sup> It is curious that Addison (*op. cit.* p. 139), in his account of Baiæ as the winter resort of the Romans, also enumerates their retreats in summer. He is not likely to have seen this letter of P.; indeed, he includes Anxur (Terracina) and Caieta, which P. reckons as winter resorts, among the places they frequented in summer. Here P. seems to be right and Addison wrong.

<sup>3</sup> He is referring to a remark of Seneca in *Mor. Ep.* 51, § 11.

<sup>4</sup> Scipio's villa at Liternum, of which no traces remain, was near the coast, about six miles north of Cumæ, at a place called Tor di Patria.

endured all the hardships of warfare and was attired as a male soldier. On his first visit she had been introduced to him in a woman's dress; and this time, on her advancing to salute him in military garb, he did not recognize her, until roused by her merriment and the prompting of his friends. He tells us that she had been on active service and had always been victorious; "her study," he says, "is not the web's warp, but weapons of war, not pins and neatness, but pith and featness."<sup>1</sup> Meeting at Pozzuoli with some military friends, strong and hardened by war, and hearing that Maria was in the citadel, the party resolved to challenge her to a trial of strength. Though herself disinclined for the contest, she watched the soldiers prove their muscle by heaving a heavy stone and an iron bar; and then her throws so easily distanced theirs that "they were utterly astounded and I felt ashamed, while we all scarce believed our eyes, thinking that there must be some illusion." Petrarch says that he could now give more credit to the Virgilian tale of Camilla, who came from Privernum (Piperno), not far away on the road to Rome.

The verse-letter to Rinaldo da Villafranca, written in the following year, adds little to our knowledge of the events of the day, except to make it clear that by "the home of the Sibyl" Petrarch means, not a cave at Cumæ, but the Grotto di Sibilla on the south-west side of Lake Avernus. He notes that birds make their nests above this cavern,<sup>2</sup> and that fish existed in the dark waters of the lake; and he expressly says that he did not himself venture within the grotto, telling a local tale of some gold-seekers who explored its recesses and were never seen again. He adds, rather naïvely, that the Styx was out of sight. The cave, however, has no subterranean stream. It is said to contain two galleries, one of which emerges on the Lucrine lake, and the other once extended to Cumæ—a mile to the west—but has now been obstructed by a fall of earth. Petrarch's chief object in writing is to tell his correspondent that his two friends had been urging him to make his home at Naples and

<sup>1</sup> Thus (without actual translation) I try to reproduce P.'s play upon words—"non telas illa, sed tela, non acus et specula, sed arcus et spicula, meditatur."

<sup>2</sup> Thus refuting Virgil's assertion (*Æn.* VI. 239-242) that, owing to the mephitic exhalations no bird could fly over the lake and cave. Some MSS. in line 242 read "Aornon" (birdless) for "Avernum."

assist them in their studies, and that, in refusing, he had suggested Rinaldo as his substitute. We have not previously heard of this friend of Petrarch, who was a schoolmaster at Verona ; and we can only guess that he made his acquaintance through Guglielmo da Pastrengo, the Verona lawyer, whom he may have visited on his journey from Parma to Avignon in 1342. Petrarch vainly exhorts his friend to give up his school and migrate to Naples, where the two followers of the Muses would welcome him and give him employment.<sup>1</sup>

The poet implies that during this mission—perhaps on his outward journey—he had been the guest of Barbato at Capua<sup>2</sup> ; but after this excursion his friend returned with him to Naples and was frequently in his society. Barbato longed to be allowed a sight of the *Africa*, which he knew Petrarch had brought in his trunk ; and, too shy to make the request himself, he employed some common friends to beg this favour of the poet. Petrarch at first refused, but when Barbato's pleaders continued their importunity, he yielded so far as to give him a copy of the episode of Mago in the sixth book under promise of the strictest secrecy. Yet, a day or two later, Petrarch saw the lines on the library-table of another friend, to whom perhaps, as one of the intercessors, Barbato considered his promise did not apply. Always placable towards a fault committed through affection, Petrarch frankly forgave his friend's breach of faith. But the mischief was already done ; and he was afterwards to suffer much annoyance from the criticism to which this fragment was subjected at Florence.<sup>3</sup>

On the very night (Monday, November 24) of the friends' return from Baïæ to Naples, where Petrarch was lodging at the Franciscan convent of San Lorenzo,<sup>4</sup> occurred the tremendous tempest described in his next letter to the Cardinal.<sup>5</sup> The storm

<sup>1</sup> The last words of the letter, "Dum te Galatea (sc. Verona?) tenebit. Nec spes libertatis erit, nec cura peculi," are borrowed from Virgil, *Ecl.* I. 32, 33.

<sup>2</sup> See *Ep. Metr.* II. xvi. 91, 92.

<sup>3</sup> P. gives an account of the affair in *Sen.* II. 1 (to Boccaccio, B. ed. p. 830).

<sup>4</sup> This fact was discovered (doubtless from the name of the prior) by L. Wadding, *Annal. Frat. Min.* Vol. VIII. But he improved upon the discovery by stating, *on the authority of the letter next quoted*, that the prior stopped the flooding of the town by meeting the sea with the relics of the saints (de Sade II. 164, n.).

<sup>5</sup> *F.* V. 5.



was no mere local disturbance, but caused great damage on all the coasts of Southern Italy.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps no letter of Petrarch is more justly famous than this, of which Ugo Foscolo published an English translation a century ago.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Reeve conjectured that the poet's account was written in imitation of the younger Pliny's famous letter<sup>3</sup> on the Vesuvian eruption; but it is certain that Pliny's correspondence was never in his hands.<sup>4</sup> No doubt in this letter—as so often—he is writing for effect; but even the artifices of his Latin style cannot modify the first emotions of astonishment and terror which he frankly confesses, and which were still fresh when he penned it.

“The satirist,<sup>5</sup> in describing an extraordinary storm, speaks of it most briefly and expressively as ‘poetic.’ The angry sky or sea can do nought which poets cannot equal or surpass in verse. . . . And yet yesterday's storm equalled, and even exceeded, the utmost efforts of description or imagination—a disaster unique and unheard of in all ages. The tempest at Naples will afford me, if I can find time, abundant material for poetry, though it affected not Naples only, but the whole of the Mediterranean and Adriatic,<sup>6</sup> and, some think, was practically universal. To me, however, it is ‘Neapolitan’ because it found me enduring tedious delay at Naples. Although the pressure of the moment and the courier's haste allow me scant time for writing, you may rest assured that nothing could be more awful or more violent.

“A report of coming evil had been started, strange to say, some days before, by a certain holy bishop of a neighbouring

<sup>1</sup> Giovanni Villani (XII. 26) says “especially at Naples.” He calls the tempest a “sirocco”—perhaps incorrectly, for that was a dry wind, confined to the summer months.

<sup>2</sup> *Essays on P.* (1823), pp. 105–111. The rendering is not made (as Mr. Reeve supposes, p. 96) directly from the Latin, but from the free Italian translation in Angelo Costanzo's *History of Naples* (Book VI.). Since the extracts in Campbell's and Mrs. Dobson's lives are merely taken from the extremely free French rendering by de Sade, I may claim that the translation below is the first into English from the original text.

<sup>3</sup> *Ep.* VI. 20—more graphic than No. 16 of that book, describing his uncle's death.

<sup>4</sup> See de Nolhac (*P. et l'Hum.*), i. 129, n., 235, n.

<sup>5</sup> Costanzo (followed by Foscolo) innocently supposed that “the satirist” must be Horace; but the passage is in Juvenal (*Sat.* XII. 23, 24). In P.'s works “satiricus” always means Juvenal or Persius, not Horace. See de Nolhac (*op. cit.*), i. 186.

<sup>6</sup> Correctly named by P. the “Mare Inferum” and “Mare Superum.” If we are to believe Villani, this is an exaggeration; and anyhow—if it is not conjecture—it must be a later addition, for P. could not have known the fact the day after the storm.

island, who is an observer of the stars. But as conjectures hardly ever attain to exact truth, he had foretold, not a storm but an earthquake, and asserted that Naples would be overthrown on November 25, 1343. And such terror had been aroused by his prediction that numbers of the people, intent on penitence and a change of conduct in prospect of death, gave up every kind of business; though many derided their fears as vain—all the more because there had been an error of time in some contemporary prophecies of serious storms, so that confidence in the prophet was utterly shaken.<sup>1</sup> As for myself—though not free from hope or from fear—I gave way to neither, but was more inclined to fear. For my usual experience is that what you dread comes to pass sooner than what you hope; and I had then heard and seen many threatening weather-signs, which from my living during winter in a cooler clime inclined me to fear—almost to superstition.

“The night had come, which was to be followed by the day of fate. A band of timid women, rendered less bashful by their peril, began to flock through the streets and squares and to throng the churches with prayers and tears. And so, affected by the public alarm, I returned home as evening fell. The air was unusually still, and trusting to this, my attendants went to bed in good time. I determined to wait, and watch the setting of the moon, which was now (I think) at the end of her first quarter. So I stood by the window facing west, till she was covered with clouds and before midnight the neighbouring hill<sup>2</sup> hid her sickly face from view. Then at length I sought my couch, to enjoy my deferred sleep. Scarcely had I dozed off, when suddenly with an awful clang, not only the window shook,<sup>3</sup> but the very walls, constructed of solid stone, rocked, and my nightlight, which generally burns while I sleep, went out. We rise from our beds, and the dread of instant death takes the place of sleep. But while we grope for each other in the dark, and then, by the help of a ghostly lamp, try to cheer ourselves with trembling voices, lo! the friars in whose house we are and their holy prior David—I say it to his honour—who had risen as usual to sing Lauds, burst into my chamber, carrying torches and crosses and relics of the saints, and, terrified by the sudden disaster, loudly implore the mercy of God. I recovered a little; and then we all proceed to their chapel and pass the night there

<sup>1</sup> Costanzo has entirely misunderstood this passage.

<sup>2</sup> The same translator coolly renders “Saint Martin’s Mount,” which is not in the original. As this hill is at the back (*i.e.* N.W.) of the city, the moon could hardly set behind it in her first quarter.

<sup>3</sup> We are not to imagine windows of glass, which was a scarce article, but “Venetian blinds,” such as were used even by the Romans.



on our knees with many sighs, thinking our end near and everything around us in ruin.

"Time fails me to express all the horror of that infernal night; and though my words be well within the truth, they would yet transcend belief. Heavens! what a deluge! what hurricane-gusts! what lightning and thunder! What trembling of the earth and roaring of the sea! what human shouts! At last, though night seemed extended by magic charm to twice its length, the dawn arrived; but we could only guess it was day, for light still failed us. The robed priests sing mass, and we kneel round on the bare, damp ground, not yet daring to look up. But when day had certainly come, though in the garb of night, suddenly every human sound in the upper city was hushed, but increased towards the shore; and since we could not learn by enquiry the state of affairs there, we find courage in despair (as men do); we mount our horses and go down to the harbour, to behold and die.

"Good God! When was ever such a story told? The oldest sailors say they never saw the like. In the middle of the harbour was an awful, dismal wreck; the waves had dashed against the rocks the poor creatures, scattered over the sea and trying to grasp with their hands the nearest land, and smashed them like so many eggshells. The whole shore was strewn with bodies, crushed and still breathing, from some of which the brains and entrails protruded. Amidst all this there was such shouting of men, such shrieking of women, as to drown the noise of sea and sky. Then there was the fall of houses, many of which were overthrown from their foundations by the stronger waves; for on that day the sea knew no limit—showed no reverence for the work of man or of nature. Not only the vast mole, built by men's labour, which makes, as Virgil says,<sup>1</sup>

‘A haven of its jutting sides’

but the whole quarter adjoining the sea was overflowed by the waves; and the pathway, where you could have walked dry-shod was under water and had become a peril to the ships. A thousand or more Neapolitan knights had assembled on horseback, as if for their country's obsequies; and as I mingled with their throng, my fears began to subside at the thought that if I perished, it would be in so great a company. Suddenly a new cry was raised that the waves were undermining the place where we stood, and we rushed to a higher spot; we could not look about us, for mortal eye could not bear the wrathful appearance of sky and sea. A thousand mountainous waves were coursing between Capri and Naples: the bay was not of an azure hue

<sup>1</sup> *Æn.* I. 159, 160 (Conington).



or black—as it generally is in great storms—but hoary with the awful brightness of the foam. Meanwhile the younger Queen, barefooted and dishevelled, with a huge band of women, whose shyness was banished by danger, emerged from the palace, and hastened to the church of the Virgin Queen to implore pardon in life's extremity.

“ You tremble, I suppose, to hear the issue of so great a panic. We on land have barely escaped ; no ship in the open sea could sustain the force of the waves, nay not even in the harbour. We saw three long ships of Marseilles (called galleys), which were at anchor on their long voyage back from Cyprus and ready to sail that morning, go down <sup>1</sup> without a single survivor from passengers or crew ; no one could give them aid, though all bewailed their loss. Other large ships and craft of all sizes, which had gained the harbour in hope of full security, met with a like fate. One only of such numbers rode out the gale ; it was manned by criminals, whose just sentence had been remitted that they might join the expedition to Sicily, and so, escaping one kind of death, might perish by another. Their huge ship, very strongly built, and protected with ox-hides, had borne the fury of the sea till sunset, and then even she began to founder. Those fellows, in the extremity of their peril, rush to repair the holes in her keel. It is said that there were 400 of them—very powerful men, enough to man a fleet rather than a single ship ; now, set free from their death-sentence, they had nothing worse to fear and so resisted it with spirit and pertinacity. Thus, though gradually sinking, they deferred their fate till the next night drew on ; then, beaten and leaving their tools, they flocked into the poop. At that moment the sky began to clear, and the wrath of the angry sea abated. And so, of the numbers that perished, the worst were saved—either because, as Lucan puts it :

‘ Fortune oft preserves the wicked,’ <sup>2</sup>

or because, in Virgil's words, ‘ Heaven willed it so,’ <sup>3</sup> or in order that we may understand that they are safest in the jaws of death whose life we hold most cheap.

“ This, in brief, is the story of yesterday ; and lest I tell it you in vain—although on the subject of extreme danger even the wise do not always speak wisely <sup>4</sup>—at least it remains for me to beg you never more to bid me commit my life to wind and wave. There is a point on which I should shrink from

<sup>1</sup> Costanzo adds the detail that they collided against each other, but P. does not say so.

<sup>2</sup> *Pharsalia*, III. 448.

<sup>3</sup> *Æn.* II. 428.

<sup>4</sup> This appears to be the main sense of a long and clumsy parenthesis.

obeying either you or the Pope or my own father, if he were to return to life. I leave the air to the birds, the sea to the fishes; being a land animal, I will make my journeys on land. So long as my foot trends the earth, I do not refuse to visit either the 'quiver-armed' Pole or the Moor so false to his guests; send me where you will not excepting even the Indies! Otherwise—pardon the confession—I shall claim my liberty not merely at the December Saturnalia,<sup>1</sup> but the whole year through. What persuasion could you use, or how even propose, that I should take a voyage? Tell me that the ship is strong, the sailors skilful; those poor fellows had both. Bid us enter port at sundown, drop the anchor, avoid the enemy, hug the coast; yet they—after long hours in port, with their anchor in viscous sand, almost able to touch the shore with an oar—perished in view of thousands of pitying friends. This is not a tale I have heard or read; I have seen it with my own eyes. So urge me no more; and in this at least let your modesty indulge my fears. I know all that the learned can say against me—as that there is equal danger everywhere, and that it is only more patent at sea. Be it so; but you will act kindly if you will let me die on land, where I was born. Scarcely any sea lies between us, in which I have not been often wrecked<sup>2</sup>; and there is an approved maxim of Publilius<sup>3</sup>: 'It is unfair to blame Neptune if you are wrecked a second time.'

“*Naples, November 26.*”

It is curious that on the very day of this fearful storm was executed the legal document<sup>4</sup> by which Petrarch was appointed domestic chaplain to Queen Joan, as he had been to her grandfather. The post was merely honorary, like the former one; but the deed is drawn up in the same flattering terms, referring to his prudence, discretion and distinguished merit. The poet, however, was by no means mollified by the compliment; he was becoming daily more enraged at the protracted delay in returning an answer to his appeal. Though as yet he could have

<sup>1</sup> At this festival (December 17–19, the counterpart of our Christmas) slaves were allowed to wear the “pileus” (the badge of freedom); they then enjoyed a banquet at which their masters waited on them in person.

<sup>2</sup> A grotesque exaggeration; he only once suffered shipwreck in 1312.

<sup>3</sup> One of the “sententiæ,” or aphorisms of the mime-writer, Publilius Syrus, which were collected early in the Middle Ages for educational use. P. here calls him “Publius,” and in *F. I.* 6 (see Vol. I. p. 446) he quotes one of these maxims as Varro’s.

<sup>4</sup> See de Sade, t. III. (*Pièces justifiées*. No. xvii. p. 49, where it is taken from Tomasini (*P. Redivivus*, p. 65).

known nothing of the Pope's resolve to send a Legate, he seems desirous of incensing the Pontiff still further against "the obstinate citizens" and their rulers. Writing to the Cardinal on the following Monday (December 1) <sup>1</sup>, he says that he had had hopes of getting a reply from the Council, which met on the previous evening. But he asserts that the meeting was hastily adjourned, because it was not safe for its members to traverse the streets after nightfall. So inveterate, he says, was the licence in the city that after dark it was infested by bands of noble youths, fully armed, who attacked and insulted the inhabitants. He was still more horrified, to his credit, by a disgusting spectacle which he had seen the day before. At the invitation of his friends and all unconscious of its character, he had attended "a scandalous gladiatorial exhibition" in the suburb of Carbonara.<sup>2</sup> It was the festival of St. Andrew (November 30), the young prince's name-day; he and the Queen were present with the elegant chivalry of Naples and crowds of the common people. Here is his account of the scene:

"Attracted by so great a concourse and by the rapt attention of the 'people of quality,' I raised my eyes, expecting some grand sight, when suddenly a thunderous burst of applause rent the air, as if at some delightful incident. I turned round, and lo! a handsome youth rolled at my very feet, pierced by a stark sword. I was amazed, and shuddering all over, I put spurs to my horse and fled from the foul and fiendish spectacle, inveighing in one breath against the trickery of my companions, the cruelty of the spectators and the madness of the 'sportsmen.' This double plague, good father, increases as it is handed down from father to son and has reached such a pitch that a licence to commit crime has usurped the name of dignity and liberty. You will marvel the less that your friends lie chained in that city, where it is 'sport' to slay an innocent man. Though Virgil calls her 'sweet,' <sup>3</sup> yet he would not unjustly have branded her, as she is now, with a Bistonian <sup>4</sup> infamy. 'Fly this fell

<sup>1</sup> *F. V.* 6.

<sup>2</sup> P. calls it "locus urbi contiguus"; de Sade says (t. II. 170, n.) that there is now a great street of that name, first enclosed by the new walls of Ferdinand I. (end of 15th century). The church of San Giovanni a Carbonara is now within the city.

<sup>3</sup> *Georg.* IV. 563, 564.

<sup>4</sup> The Bistones were a Thracian tribe—doubtless fierce and cruel, like the rest of their race. But I know of no classic reference which marks the Bistones as peculiarly cruel, unless it be Ovid, *Ibis*, 281, 282, which hints at some superstitious outrage.



soil, these greedy shores.' <sup>1</sup> This saying, father, I shall accept as applying to Naples; and unless you hear to the contrary, you may be sure that within three days—even if my object be unaccomplished—I have taken wing first into Cisalpine, then into Transalpine, Gaul, and towards yourself—a fact which makes every moment and all my travels (except those by sea) an agreeable pastime.

“*Naples, December 1.*”

In this letter—the last written in the fair city which, though often invited, he was never to enter again—we detect a deliberate attempt to invoke the Pope's active interference in Neapolitan affairs. First there is the hint that the Council were unable to maintain law and order and were even afraid to bring the offenders to justice. Then there is the account of the gladiatorial exhibition, which had already, in the reign of Robert, incurred Pontifical censure. Petrarch may not have been aware of the express prohibition; but, as a keen student of Roman manners, he could hardly have been ignorant that the rulers of the previous century had done much to stamp out these relics of the heathen arena. Louis IX. had suppressed the practice in France; and the Emperor Frederick II. had tried to take similar action in Naples, but without success. In 1313 Clement V. had positively forbidden such games; and John XXII., twenty years later, had threatened with excommunication both combatants and spectators. The ban had been removed by the more indulgent Benedict; yet some years after this letter Clement VI. had to issue a fresh prohibition.<sup>2</sup> Petrarch's extreme horror may be a sign of the progress of a more enlightened humanity<sup>3</sup>; but even the sports of the tournament—now at the height of their popularity—often had fatal results.

The exact date of Petrarch's departure from Naples is not known; but it could not have been many days after he wrote

<sup>1</sup> *Æn.* III. 44.

<sup>2</sup> See Baddeley, pp. 308–310. The letter of Clement renewing the prohibition is dated July 23, 1349.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Lecky (*European Morals*, ii. 38, 4th ed.), quoting P. at third hand (through A. F. Ozanam, *Hist. of Civilization*, 1888, i. 130, who gives a wrong date and reference to this letter) says that P. speaks of “considerable bloodshed” at these games. In fact P. confining his experience to the one incident, merely says that “the blood of men is shed, as if they were cattle.”

the letter last quoted. That he left Barbato there may be inferred from the terms of his verse-letter of farewell by composing which he beguiled the tedium of his long winter ride.<sup>1</sup> He speaks of his intention to remain at Parma till he had completed his *Africa*,<sup>2</sup> and says nothing, as in that last letter to the Cardinal, about his approaching return to Avignon. On the contrary, he draws a graphic picture of his retreat at Selva Piana, with the evident intention of spending the summer there on his poetic work, which its charms had inspired him to resume in 1341.<sup>3</sup> He hints, too, at a new literary project, which he declines to specify,<sup>4</sup> but which we know to have been the commencement during the coming year of his Books on *Memorable Things*.

We have no particulars of his journey; but we know from a letter of old age<sup>5</sup> that when he arrived at Parma, he was received with amazement, as a ghostly visitant from another world. During his absence in the south a report of his death in Sicily had been spread from Liguria through Emilia to Venice and was accepted as true, even by many of his friends. A poetical admirer at Ferrara, the physician Antonio de' Beccari, composed a Canzone of lament,<sup>6</sup> in which the most famous grammarians, poets, philosophers and historians, with Minerva closing the procession, are represented as attending his funeral on Mount Parnassus. This curious composition has managed to reach posterity, and is to be found in the "Giunta" or Appendix, to some editions of the *Canzoniere*. It was already known before Petrarch arrived, and was supposed to authenticate the news of his decease.<sup>7</sup> When he suddenly appeared in the flesh, there were some who, "like Thomas," could not credit the evidence of their eyes till they had handled his person.

<sup>1</sup> *Ep. Metr.* II. xvii. ("Dulcis amice, vale"). It was written after their separation (ll. 5, 6) and before he reached Parma (ll. 16-18).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* ll. 57-61.

<sup>3</sup> See above, Chap. XV. pp. 168-171.

<sup>4</sup> *Ep. cit.* l. 63, "Hoc unum tibi subtrahimus."

<sup>5</sup> *Sen.* III. 7 (to Neri Morando), B. ed. p. 858.

<sup>6</sup> This Canzone ("Io ho gia letto") is to be found in P. F. Soave's edition of the *Rime* (Milan, 1806, t. ii. pp. 183-187). P. calls Beccari "non mali vir ingenii, sed vagi"—a description illustrated by the poem, in which the mourning orators are Cicero, Geoffrey de Vinsauf and Alain de Lisle! A. Solerti (*Rime Disperse di F. P.* pp. 88-96) gives four sonnets of Beccari with replies by P. in corresponding rhymes. For one of these see Vol. I. p. 275.

<sup>7</sup> So P. says in *Sen.* III. 7, but it is hardly credible that a MS. poem can have done much to spread a rumour within a few weeks of its origin.

Some months later Petrarch replied to the author of his funeral song with a sonnet <sup>1</sup> intimating that though he had been near the gates of death, the hour of his fate had not yet struck. In the letter of old age, which was written about 1365, he adds that scarcely a year had passed in the interval without the dissemination of a similar rumour.

Of the fourteen months which he was now to spend at Parma we have scarcely any record. There is so little information that even the usually accurate de Sade supposed that Petrarch's escape from Parma happened in February, 1344, and that he returned direct from Bologna to Avignon, whence he again set out for Italy in the spring of 1345.<sup>2</sup> Tiraboschi first pointed out the error in his animadversions on de Sade's book soon after its publication <sup>3</sup>; but he failed to indicate the decisive argument against it—that the siege of Parma did not begin till the end of 1344. His omission was supplied by Baldelli in a learned note <sup>4</sup>; and it is now established that the poet spent the whole of 1344 at Parma or in its environs.

One early incident of his stay helps to explain the sonnet last quoted. This was a serious attack of fever—like those of 1342 and September, 1355—which at one time he expected to prove fatal. There are two short verse-letters to his friend Pastrengo,<sup>5</sup> which, I am confident, refer to this attack. In the first he writes hopelessly about his ailment and speaks

<sup>1</sup> Carducci (*Rime di F. P.*, Livorno, 1876, p. 102) supposes that P. refers here (S. 96) to the fever he had at Parma in 1342. But it is more likely that he alludes to the illness in the spring of 1344, mentioned just below.

<sup>2</sup> De Sade, t. II. 183–218. He is misled by the idea that P. was present at the coronation of Louis de la Cerda as King of the Canaries at Avignon on November 28, 1344. P. gives an account of that curious ceremony, but he does not say that he was himself present; he had evidently heard the particulars from his friends. (See *Vit. Sol.* II., § iii. cap. 6; B. ed. p. 314.)

<sup>3</sup> G. Tiraboschi, *Storia della Letteratura Italiana* (2nd ed., Modena, 1787–1794) t. V. Pt. II. Lib. iii. cap. 2).

<sup>4</sup> In the edition of 1837, pp. 307–309.

<sup>5</sup> *Ep. Metr.* III. xi., xii. Fracassetti (*It.* ii. 442) refers them doubtfully to 1355, and Magrini (*Ep. Metr. di F. P.* 1907, pp. 144, 145) accepts the suggestion. But III. xi. shows that it was written in a city apprehending an attack; and Magrini's assertion that this applies to Milan in September, 1355, is not borne out by facts; the excesses of Count Lando's company did not happen in the Milanese, while the war with Albornoz was three or four years later. I am tempted to suggest that the attempt upon Parma (see below, p. 341), placed by Muratori (*Annali d'Italia*, t. viii. p. 183) in 1343, really happened early in the next year.



of an alarm of war, which had called the citizens to arms and induced them to place sentries on the walls; in the second he relates how his health was restored by a marvellous draught, prescribed for him by a friend or physician. We are enabled to date this illness by a complimentary poem addressed to him, the original copy of which still exists in the Laurentian Library at Florence, and which is endorsed by himself as "Received, April 30, 1344; answered, May 4."<sup>1</sup> This is a panegyric in 79 hexameters,<sup>2</sup> sent him by Gabrio de' Zamorei (or Zamorra), a doctor in civil law (presumably of Bologna, but born and educated at Parma), of whose attainments his native city had good reason to be proud. He was nearly ten years older than our poet,<sup>3</sup> and his reputation was already high throughout Lombardy and Emilia. The opening lines of Petrarch's reply<sup>4</sup> show that when he received it, he was confined to bed by his complaint, which had affected the use of his right hand.

In Gabrio's effusion he speaks of Petrarch as "the brightest star in the poetic firmament, a ray of light in the darkness of the time." His fame had gone through the world; with him the golden age had returned to earth, and in its train had come Homer, Virgil, Ovid, and Lucan. He calls him "a second Orpheus" and says that Minerva had made a mirror of him that she may see her own face and fall in love with it, as Narcissus did with his image in the water. Gabrio longs for our poet's friendship, as Orestes for that of Pylades; but he likens himself to an ant applying to a lion, or a grasshopper to a noble eagle. It is love which constrains him, while so conscious of his own deficiencies, to be a humble petitioner for his good will; his earnest prayer is that Petrarch's fame may never die. The reply of the latter is in the same vein of extravagant compliment. He says that Gabrio's missive found him in bed, suffering from severe fever and reading Cicero's *De Finibus*, and that it restored the Muses

<sup>1</sup> I formerly supposed the date 1344 to be given only by those who followed de Sade's error, and the illness to be the result of P.'s fall from his horse during his escape in 1345. But A. Zardo (*P. e i Carraresi*, Milan, 1887, p. 76, n.) says that he has himself examined the MS. and gives the exact words as above.

<sup>2</sup> Printed in Rossetti ii. 400-402.

<sup>3</sup> In his book on virtues and vices he says he was born soon after the resignation of Celestine V. (December, 1294). See the full account of him by Marco Vattasso (*Del P. e di alcuni suoi amici*, Rome, 1904), pp. 37-63, from which these particulars are taken.

<sup>4</sup> *Ep. Metr.* II. x.

to his side. His correspondent's encomiums had brought a blush to his brow; all that he had done was to go a little way up Parnassus, and behold its sovereign poets from afar. So through many lines he contrives to accept this poetic incense, while professing himself unworthy of it. Gabrio will soon be convinced of that by reading his halting reply. But he eagerly accepts the proffered friendship; even if far from the jurist's equal in position and mental gifts,<sup>1</sup> yet love can join the loftiest and the lowest, as the great-souled Robert condescended to love his humble self. Thus here, as elsewhere,<sup>2</sup> he manages to "throw in" the late King's patronage as a sufficient explanation of the world's high opinion of himself. To the autograph copy of Gabrio's poem at Florence is appended a very indifferent Italian sonnet<sup>3</sup> in the same strain.

From a sentence in Petrarch's reply<sup>4</sup> we may infer that Gabrio was not in Parma at the time, but was discharging some important office elsewhere. This was probably at Milan, where he is found after 1350 in the service of the Visconti Archbishop, and where in 1355 he delivered an oration at the assumption by Charles IV. of the iron crown in San Ambrogio. In that city—if anywhere—he must have become personally acquainted with Petrarch; for he was chosen to write the epitaph of his militant patron,<sup>5</sup> and even in extreme old age he was retained as an examiner in Galeazzo Visconti's University at Pavia. But Petrarch has preserved no other letter addressed to him, and does not even mention him in his voluminous correspondence of that period. Gabrio wrote some prose discourses on the virtues and vices, which still exist in manuscript, and two books of Latin verse which are now lost<sup>6</sup>; his style is careless, and his reading, though wide for his day, is ill-digested. He survived our poet more than twelve years, dying at over ninety in his native city.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Signora Magrini (p. 108) appears to me to misunderstand altogether lines 62–66. P. is suggesting not his superiority but his inferiority—in position at least—to Gabrio.

<sup>2</sup> See, also, the first letter to Zoilus, *Ep. Metr.* II. xi.

<sup>3</sup> "Le duodex donne," given by Magrini, p. 109.

<sup>4</sup> "Absimili quamquam secernimur astro," l. 63.

<sup>5</sup> Although P. resided in the city at the time.

<sup>6</sup> *Orphea* and *Liber poeticus adolescentiæ* (Vattaſso, p. 50).

<sup>7</sup> He was living in October, 1386, and certainly dead twenty months later (*ibid.* p. 46).

During this stay in Parma Petrarch occupied the same house in which he had lived two years before.<sup>1</sup> But instead of renting it as he then did, he purchased it in 1344<sup>2</sup>; and since it was too small for his convenience, he had it enlarged or reconstructed as soon as it became his property. We naturally wonder how far these proceedings were communicated to his patron, to whom he had just been promising, in complimentary style, an early return to Avignon.<sup>3</sup> Even if he were not expected to report in person upon the result of his mission, the Cardinal must have provided for his expenses, and have furnished one at least of the two or three attendants whom he had with him. But Petrarch, whether or no he presumed upon the Cardinal's indulgence, was of an independent turn of mind. He may have wished to obtain a foothold upon his native soil—in order to serve as an excuse for more frequent absences from Avignon, which would have fewer attractions for him now that his brother had finally left it. The visit to Azzo was probably pre-arranged; he did not yet know that his friend's stay in Parma was to be brief. This alone is enough to show that the purchase and enlargement of the house preceded Azzo's departure; and we know that the building was his own "long before" he was appointed Archdeacon in 1349.<sup>4</sup> Italian critics have assumed that its acquisition must have been after his appointment to the Parma canonry in 1346, because in the verse-letter next to be quoted he hints at an improvement in his financial position.<sup>5</sup> But the argument is far from conclusive. The poet already had two canonries with a regular allowance from the Cardinal; he had just returned from an important mission, for which he must have been well remunerated; it is even possible that he may have inherited money from relatives at Florence, for we first find him in communication with some of them about this time.<sup>6</sup> It has also been

<sup>1</sup> *Ep. Post.* and *F. V.* 7 (Frac. I. 277) of December 27, 1344.

<sup>2</sup> Such is Fracassetti's correct decision (*It.* i. 173); but he spoils it by an inconsistent note (ii. 440), and he is wrong as to the identity of the house with that now shown as P.'s.

<sup>3</sup> *F. V.* 6 (see above, p. 332).

<sup>4</sup> Garimberti, his successor in the Archdeaconry, claimed this private house from P.'s heir, but lost his case on the grounds above stated (A. Ronchini, *La dimora del P. in Parma*, Modena, 1874, p. 42).

<sup>5</sup> *Ep. Metr.* II. xix. 11, 12 (quoted below). The reference is quite general.

<sup>6</sup> With Giovanni dell Ancisa (*F.* III. 18, VII. 10, 11, 12) and with their common relative, Francesco degli Albizzi, in 1345 (below, Chap. XIX.).



overlooked that in a letter from Avignon of September 11, 1347, he speaks of the Parma residence as his own and says that it has been waiting for him and "complaining of his absence" for two whole years.<sup>1</sup> He did not re-enter it till the beginning of 1348; and on August 23 of that year he applied for the Archdeaconry of the Cathedral, which he must have known would put him in possession of a far better house. He received the appointment certainly in 1349<sup>2</sup>; and with such an improvement in his prospects, he is not likely to have then spent money in buying and enlarging his other house. The residence in Parma now shown as his was never his private property, but attached to the Archdeaconry<sup>3</sup>; and there is no proof that he ever moved into it, for in May, 1349, he was still living in his own smaller house, and he left Parma for the last time in the autumn of 1350.

I should therefore confidently date the verse-letter to Pastrengo<sup>4</sup> in the summer of 1344—all the more because he says he was employed on the *Africa*; and I do not believe that he ever seriously grappled with that task, of which he was already wearying, after the year in question. His friend had urged him to give a full account of himself, and his reply is consciously couched in the Horatian manner.

"You ask my occupation? 'Tis the toil  
Which is man's lot.—My thoughts? They are of rest,  
By hope denied me.—Whither my roaming tends?  
By that sure path which leads so fast to death.—  
My purpose? Brave and eager for release.—  
My comrades? Mortal men.—My goal? The tomb.—  
And after? Heaven, or if repulsed thence, Hell  
(The last may God avert!)—My present home?  
At Parma.—And my usual haunts? The church,  
Or else my garden, though sometimes the woods  
Lure me from town.—My sustenance? 'Tis much  
As usual, though kinder Fortune tempt  
To more expense.—My spirits? Fairly good.—  
My heart's pursuit? The *Africa*—Reward  
Of study? Empty Fame, Virtue's sole need."

There is a crispness in these lines, which is too often lacking in

<sup>1</sup> F. VII. 1 (to Barbato (Frac. I. 356).

<sup>2</sup> This is proved by the letter to Cristiano of May, 1349 (Frac. III. 527, Appendix VI.) in which he calls himself Archdeacon. I am doubtful as to his supposed induction on June 20, 1350 (see below, Chap. XXII.).

<sup>3</sup> (*Loc. cit.*) "Domum, non quidem nostram, sed archidiaconatus nostri propriam." The subsequent history of this house, which is that in the Vico San Stefano, No. 4, is given by Ronchini (*op. cit.*), pp. 43-50.

<sup>4</sup> *Ep. Metr.* II. xix.

Petrarch's verse. He goes on to explain that his chief solicitude is about the rebuilding of his house, and he wishes that the marbles of his friend's Verona were nearer at hand. Sometimes, warned by the terms of Horace's Ode,<sup>1</sup> he thinks the expense a folly and sighs for a cottage in the woods. Then, on inspecting the work, he detects a crack in the walls and reproachfully shows it to the builders, who protest volubly that old foundations cannot always support new work—at least they require time; the building will last his life, and even shelter his grandchildren. The reply awakens Petrarch's ascetic strain; he takes it as a reminder that weak though his house may be, his body is weaker, and he will have to "evacuate" both alike. But he is ashamed to leave his plans unfinished, for the scaffolding had already attracted the public gaze. Yet he still wavers between a modest cottage—like Curius' Sabine farm<sup>2</sup> or that of Virgil's veteran in the *Georgics*<sup>3</sup>—and the lofty palaces of Rome and Babylon. His imagination soars to the rural and seaside villas of the ancients; and then he laughs at his own dreams as the climax of mortal folly.

With the coming of autumn a letter (perhaps in verse)<sup>4</sup> arrived from Socrates, chiding him for his delayed return. With the freedom of intimate friendship he expressed wonder that Petrarch could bear to be so long absent from "Laura" and implied that personally he missed him sorely. He added that the Pope was asking for him and would doubtless give him further promotion if he were to return to his court. Socrates seems also to have betrayed some impatience at the ascendancy exercised by Azzo over the poet; he hinted that Parma was threatened with attack from without, and that it was scarcely honourable of Azzo to detain his friend in a position of such peril.

Petrarch replies in a verse-letter<sup>5</sup> that these exhortations are simply lost labour; he can never be attracted by the rapid

<sup>1</sup> *Odes*, II. xviii. ("Non ebur, neque aureum").

<sup>2</sup> Rossetti's translator (II. 406) ingeniously suggests "Capenis" for the meaningless "catenis" of the folios. But Capena was in Etruria, though not far from the probable site of Curius' farm.

<sup>3</sup> The "Corycius senex" of *Georg.* IV. 125-148.

<sup>4</sup> In *Vit. Sol.* II. § x. cap. 1, P. speaks of the *Musarum familiaritas* which made Socrates illustrious; but it is uncertain whether this includes poetry as well as music, in which he was most skilled.

<sup>5</sup> *Ep. Metr.* III. xxvii.

Rhone, or the violent Mistral,<sup>1</sup> or the constant rumbling of vehicles in Avignon's narrow streets. He reproaches his friend for reminding him of "Laura," whom he should rather have bidden him forget.<sup>2</sup> Socrates should know that she is the real cause of his flight; he has now determined to put away childish things, for he is sick of being pointed at as a love-lorn swain. As to the separation of the two friends, he thinks that since his affection for Socrates has so often drawn him to Avignon, it is time that Socrates should return it by coming just once to Parma. Petrarch avows that he seeks nothing from the Pope, who "has open hands and long arms," and if he wants to befriend him, can do so in Italy as well as in France. Then, in regard to his own supposed peril, he is well aware of it, but what place is free from danger? As for Azzo, if he dies, it will be in a glorious cause and his fame will rise correspondingly<sup>3</sup>; he has learning, skill, virtue and—rarest of all—good faith. They have lived in harmony together in town and country, where in autumn they employ themselves in bird-snaring. Petrarch says he is becoming daily more attracted to Italy, on whose lap, attended by this loving friend, he hopes at last to rest his weary head. It is remarkable that this letter does not once refer to the Cardinal's claim upon him. In another poem<sup>4</sup> of perhaps the same date, which is a clever exercise in jocular hyperbole, he tells his friend that his resolution would not be shaken till the most impossible things happen—till the sun rises in the west and sets in the east, till the Po flows back to its source, till Etna ejects ice and the cavern of the Sorgues flames, till the wind drives the fields and the clouds resist it—and much more in the same strain. If Socrates had been of a jealous temper, these letters, however humorous, would scarcely conduce to his peace of mind.

<sup>1</sup> "Rectâ non Circius aurâ Mænia concutiens" (ll. 3, 4) must mean the Mistral, though the latter is a north-east, the former properly a north-west wind.

<sup>2</sup> This may be partly sincere—as his opinion in a composition likely to be handed about—but at this very time he was adding to the love poems of the *Canzoniere*. S. 97 ("Dicesett' anni") was written at Parma; perhaps the beautiful C. XVII. ("Di pensier in pensier") was composed at Selva Piana, though H. Cochin (p. 92) seems to prefer Verona in 1345.

<sup>3</sup> The passage recalls the liberation Canzone ("Quel c'ha nostra") with its bias against Mastino. In that case P. could have known nothing of the new orientation of Azzo's plans.

<sup>4</sup> *Ep. Metr.* III. xxviii.



Nevertheless it seems clear from the *Letter to Posterity*<sup>1</sup> that Petrarch knew well, though to Socrates he might not care to confess it, that Azzo's political star was on the wane. The harmony which prevailed in 1341 between the Correggi brothers had ceased to exist. Azzo would soon have to choose between Luchino Visconti, whom he feared (though under a promise to surrender Parma to him in 1345), and Mastino della Scala, who was his mortal enemy. Azzo's brother Guido was in favour of abiding by the secret compact, whatever the consequences to the liberty of the city.<sup>2</sup> Azzo himself—so loudly acclaimed by the poet as the champion of freedom—now shrank from the consequences of his own duplicity and was looking out for someone to whom he could sell the lordship and then decamp with the spoil. His wife's family—the Gonzaghi of Mantua—who had also helped him to oust Mastino, were still closely allied with the Visconti; but Azzo knew that there were dangerous plots in the city in favour of the exiled Rossi and that his rule might be overthrown in a night, before he could find a safe line of retreat. Obizzo, Marquis d'Este, who commanded Mastino's troops, had already attempted to surprise the city and restore the exiles; but his attempt was premature, and met with no success. Soon after its failure a three years' truce had been concluded between the two leagues, of which Milan and Verona were the centres; yet it was merely a suspension of hostilities, and the least false step on either side would precipitate a conflict. Obizzo had many partisans in Parma; and Azzo at length decided to sell the lordship to the Marquis, with the tacit acquiescence of Mastino, for 60,000 gold florins.<sup>3</sup> The compact was duly signed on October 23, 1344; and Azzo soon after disappeared with the money, without sharing it with his brother Guido, who retired to his country-seat in disgust.<sup>4</sup>

How far Azzo confided in Petrarch before executing this sudden *volte-face* can only be surmised; but if we are right in dating the letter to Socrates in the previous September, it would seem that the poet was in blissful ignorance of the whole

<sup>1</sup> Frac. I. 9 (on the discord between the Correggi).

<sup>2</sup> So says de Sade (II. 216), but he gives no authority. Anyhow Guido, whatever his views, had fallen out with Azzo.

<sup>3</sup> Such is Villani's account (XII. 34); other authorities say 70,000.

<sup>4</sup> So says Muratori, *Annali d'Italia*, t. viii. p. 184.

affair.<sup>1</sup> He was absorbed in his literary work ; and the letter implies that when he retired to Rossena or Selva Piana in the summer heats, he was generally alone.<sup>2</sup> He may have been aware of Azzo's anxieties, without inquiring too closely into his political schemes. At least he never, so far as we know, reproached his friend for deserting him ; and when he settled in his repaired house in the late autumn, the new *régime* was already beginning. On November 10 the Marquis moved out from his city of Modena with a considerable force to occupy his new possession, having first taken care to obtain leave from Filipino Gonzaga, the lord of Reggio (who belonged to the opposing league) to pass through his state. The citizens of Parma received Obizzo with joy, and on the 24th proclaimed him their newly elected lord. On December 6, after some days of festivity, he started to return by the way he had come and passed the night at Montecchio. Next morning his advanced guard fell into an ambush laid for them by a Milanese force under Filipino Gonzaga, and over 700 were made prisoners. The Marquis himself, who was in the rear, retreated hastily upon Parma and returned by another route to his dominions, leaving his relative, Francesco, with a small garrison in charge of the city. While Obizzo was busy in Parma, Filipino had hastened to Milan and persuaded the Visconti to lend him 800 knights and some infantry in order to intercept the Este force on their return, thus totally disregarding the truce and his own guaranteed safe-conduct. All Italy cried shame upon Filipino for this deliberate treachery, for which he could only offer the lame excuse that his safe-conduct applied only to the outward, not to the homeward, journey. The war between the leagues was thus openly renewed ; and Filipino obtained more men from Milan in order to block all the roads leading to Parma and prevent it from being revictualled. Meanwhile the Verona league was not idle. Mastino, with his allies at Padua and Bologna, sent troops to the help of the Marquis, who proceeded, with the leisurely tactics then fashionable, not to raise the siege by a vigorous attack, but to blockade the blockaders.

These external events must have proved very unfavourable to the steady winter's work, which Petrarch had doubtless been contemplating. Some weeks later he speaks, as we shall see,<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See above, n. 3, p. 340.

<sup>2</sup> *Ep. Metr.* III. xxviii. ll. 76, 77.

<sup>3</sup> *F. V.* 10 (translated below).

of the siege having lasted "for months"; but the investment of the town was probably not complete for so long a period. Indeed at the end of the year he managed to send off a letter to the canonist Giovanni d'Andrea at Bologna,<sup>1</sup> in which he makes no reference to the threatening state of public affairs. That letter—if we could be sure that no interpolations were made in it at a later date<sup>2</sup>—would show that he had already made some progress in a new prose work, the books *On Memorable Things*, which he had begun this year—perhaps after completing his rough draft of the *Africa*. If we consider that most of his classical library must have been left behind at Avignon or Vaucluse, the commencement of such a work affords astonishing proof of the strength and tenacity of his memory. But it is of course possible that, having drawn up a general plan, he had merely written, out of their proper order, some chapters which would serve as specimens of its scope. It is a kind of commonplace book—like that of Valerius Maximus,<sup>3</sup> from whom the idea is borrowed—designed to illustrate by anecdotes from ancient and modern history the practice of the four cardinal virtues.<sup>4</sup> We postpone a review of it to a later chapter<sup>5</sup>; here we need only note it as one of his numerous undertakings, conceived on a gigantic scale and afterwards thrown aside.

At length, weary of his suspense and enforced idleness in the city, he determined on February 23, 1345, to attempt an escape with some friends through the cordon of encircling troops. The following is his account of his adventure, written soon after from Bologna to the affectionate Barbato.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> F. V. 7 (December 27). Its contents prove that it was written not before 1343 and from his house in Parma; and there is no other year to which it can be referred, as d'Andrea died of the plague in 1348.

<sup>2</sup> A. Gaspary (trans. by N. Zingarelli, p. 375) and G. Kirner (*Sulle opere storiche di F. P.*, Pisa, 1889) seem scarcely conscious of this possibility; but in *Rev. Mem. Lib. IV. cap. 3* (B. ed. p. 524) P. speaks of his visit to the Sibyl's cave as recent ("nuper") and in the *Africa* (IX. 263-267) he alludes to the composition of *Rev. Mem.* as "future."

<sup>3</sup> *Exemplorum Memorabilium Libri IX.* with a fulsome dedication to Tiberius.

<sup>4</sup> So Gaspary (*loc. cit.*). Kirner thinks that the last chapter of *Rev. Mem. Lib. IV. (cap. IX. "De modestia")* is against this view; but that may be merely a fragment intended for a later book, which is wrongly placed.

<sup>5</sup> See below, Chap. XXXVIII. (Book VII.) on P.'s historical works.

<sup>6</sup> F. V. 10 (in part taken down from P.'s dictation). Its contents seem to prove (Frac. I. 284 "multis jam diebus intarjectis") that the date of February 25 (perhaps inadvertently added in 1359) is some days too early.



"I mean, in my usual fashion, to make you a partner in my toils and vicissitudes. You are aware that war has broken out at Parma. We are beset, and are confined within the bounds of our one city by great disturbances not only in Liguria, but almost all over Italy. It is not that our friends are wanting in courage, as they have shown by many a brave sally; but such is the enemy's craft that he gives us no chance either of peace or of fighting. He trusts to win by patience and to enfeeble our spirits by the tedium of a long siege. At length, by one of the frequent shifts of fortune, the besieger became himself besieged, and the issue is still uncertain. But both sides are using all their strength, and if I mistake not, the day of decision is rapidly approaching. My own mind wavers, and does not wholly incline to either side, studying to avoid both futile hopes and needless fears. In these circumstances we have been enduring, not for a few days but for many months, the pressure of a siege, one of the worst hardships of war.<sup>1</sup>

"So I was lately seized with a longing for liberty—a boon for which I earnestly pray and strive and which I pursue, though it eludes me over land and sea. I had already begun to pine for my 'Transalpine Helicon' since my 'Italian' was ablaze with war; and so I was the victim of both aversion and longing. But what was I to do? Since the road to the west was utterly impassable, I turned to the east—a direction in which, though it swarmed with the enemy, the shorter passage seemed more safe than the long circuit through Tuscany. And so, leaving the city with a few companions at sunset on February 23rd, I picked my way between the enemy outposts. At midnight when I had almost reached Reggio—a hostile town—suddenly a body of brigands<sup>2</sup> sprang from an ambush, loudly threatening us with death. There was no time to deliberate; our position, the dead of night and the encircling foe made every course full of peril. What could our little band, unarmed and unprepared, do against a superior force of armed men, bent on mischief? Our one hope lay in darkness and in flight.

' My comrades scatter far and wide  
Well pleased in thickest night to hide.'<sup>3</sup>

"For my own part, I admit, I snatched myself from death and from the clang of arms that rang all round me. And when I thought I had escaped every hazard (where can a man ever be sure of safety?)—whether from the obstacle of a ditch

<sup>1</sup> The terms of this paragraph show that it was written in Parma before the escape.

<sup>2</sup> The word is "latrones," which may be merely a term of abuse applied to enemy soldiers (not "brigands" in the strict sense).

<sup>3</sup> *Æneid* IV. 123 (Conington).

or a stone or some fallen timber, for in that cloudy and pitch-dark night we could see nothing—the trusty steed which carried me fell headlong with such violence that I felt broken and almost lifeless. I rose without losing my presence of mind and—though now for many days I have not been able to lift my hand to my mouth—then, gaining strength from my terror, I remounted my horse. Of my companions some had returned home; others, though wandering vaguely round, had not abandoned their attempt. Our two guides, weary and panic-stricken, could find no sign of our whereabouts and compelled us to halt in a trackless spot whence, to add to our alarm, we could hear the calls of the enemy sentries on some neighbouring walls. Besides this, a storm had come on with savage hail; and the constant claps of thunder renewed the insistent dread of a more awful death.<sup>1</sup>

“It would be a long story if I were to tell you all. We passed that truly infernal night in the open, lying on the ground; and meanwhile the swelling and pain from my injured arm grew steadily worse. No grassy turf, no shelter of over-arching leaves, no rift in a hollow rock invited us to sleep; we had but the bare ground, a stormy wind, an angry sky, the fear both of man and beast and—an additional trial in my case—an injured frame. In such extremities we had one source of comfort which may arouse your astonishment and pity. We used the backs of our horses, which were drawn up crossways, as a kind of tent and shelter against the storm; though just before champing and excited, they now became quiet and still, as if from a sense of their own misery, and so performed a double service for us that night. Thus, weary and trembling, we waited for the dawn. As soon as a doubtful glimmer of light showed us a path among the briers, we left the perilous spot with all speed. Entering the walls of a friendly town, called Scandiano, we learnt that a large force of horse and foot had been lying in wait for us the whole night near the walls, and shortly before our coming had been forced by the storm to retreat.

“Now deny, if you dare, the great power of Fortune, which could bring their plots to nought and make our wandering our salvation. I am rallying you, my dear Barbato; for you know my view of Fortune, that she is a name of terror. However that may be, the storm and our losing the way were a real benefit; our misfortunes delivered us from things far worse. When day broke at Scandiano, I revealed my accident (which I had hitherto kept to myself) to my companions, who shed

<sup>1</sup> The adjective is “famosior,” which Fracassetti renders “piu riordevole.” But I think it simply refers to P.’s special dread of thunder. See above, Chaps. XIII. and XVI.

many tears over it ; and since it did not seem safe to stay even here, I had my arm temporarily bandaged and reached Modena by a mountain path. Next day brought me to Bologna, where I write you this by the hand of another that you may be informed of my condition and of the true state of affairs. My hurt will receive all the attention that human skill can give. The hope of recovery is sure, but it will be slow. The doctors say that summer will bring relief ; I look for the aid of Almighty God. Meanwhile my right arm is numb, and refuses to obey ; my mind is the brisker for the mishap.

*“ Bologna, February 25.”*

This adventure reveals Petrarch's character in a new light. He was never remarkable for physical courage ; yet the attempt of a few unarmed men to pass through the enemy's lines on a dark night sounds as romantic as it must have been perilous. He represents the scheme as his own ; but since the enemy had got wind of it and was determined to prevent it, we may surmise that some personage of a more daring spirit and of greater political importance, who would have been a valuable prisoner, was concerned in it, and that Petrarch had been persuaded to join in this bold bid for freedom. It seems hardly likely that he would risk taking his precious books and manuscripts on so desperate a venture ; but these he might leave in charge of a servant with instructions to convey them to Verona at the first opportunity.

The last letter left him at Bologna, the scene of his early studies ; and it would be interesting to know whether he found any friends there to offer him hospitality during his recovery from his accident. He has given us no information upon the subject ; but though nineteen years had passed since he quitted the city, there must still have been some who remembered him as a raw scholar. He had since made the acquaintance of the famous canonist, Giovanni d'Andrea, and had recently been in correspondence with him. It is quite possible that this old professor (he was now seventy-three years of age), who was rich and charitable, was able to befriend him<sup>1</sup> ; but nothing whatever is really known of this visit to Bologna, or even how long

<sup>1</sup> A. Levati (*Viaggi del P.*, Milan, 1820, ii. 329-339) invents a series of incidents at Bologna, for which no evidence exists—such as an interview between P. and G. d'Andrea with his daughter Novella.



it lasted.<sup>1</sup> It seems probable that Azzo had made up his quarrel with his nephew Mastino and had taken refuge at Verona. If so, Petrarch would at once communicate with him and with his other friends in that city; and an invitation would be sent him to repair thither as soon as he was fit to travel.

There is only one letter in the correspondence which I am inclined to place during the days or weeks of this stay at Bologna, and that is the verse-letter to Pietro Alighieri,<sup>2</sup> the eldest son of Dante, who had long been residing in Verona as a judge or magistrate in the courts. Carducci justly calls this letter "brief, anxious, mysterious, like an exile's hope"<sup>3</sup>; and indeed its terms are so obscure that more than one view has been taken of its meaning. The only certainties about it are that it is a reply to a letter from his correspondent, and that its brevity was due to a numbness in his right hand,<sup>4</sup> the cause of which was known to Pietro. Petrarch says that if the latter's news is trustworthy, his own prospects are brighter, and "an end to his tears" is approaching; but perhaps Pietro is misled<sup>5</sup> by his love of his country, which men cherish the more deeply, if fortune has been more kind to them. The natural meaning of this would be that Pietro had been telling our poet that Florence would welcome him back with open arms—perhaps restore to him his confiscated patrimony—if he would make some advance to the ruling party there. If this be right, the whole passage would suggest that Pietro was more favourably disposed towards Florence and more ready to forget the old cause of offence (the unjust banishment of their fathers) than Petrarch himself. The idea of Signora Magrini<sup>6</sup> that the letter was written ten years later when the poet was in disgrace with the Scaligeri, and that the "patria" is Pietro's adopted country of Verona, gives in my

<sup>1</sup> The next certain date we have is that of the first letter to Cicero (June 16), when P. must have been some time in Verona. De Sade (II. 227) wrongly dates it May 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Ep. Metr.* III. vii.

<sup>3</sup> *Studi Letterari* (Bologna, 1893), p. 220.

<sup>4</sup> The folio editions have the meaningless reading "habet" (l. 11), for which Rossetti's commentator (III. 243) felicitously substitutes "hebet." The word exactly agrees with the "torpens dextra" of *F. V.* 10 (*ad fin.*).

<sup>5</sup> I take it that l. 5 of the poem proves that the "sapiens" of l. 1 is Pietro himself. Magrini's suggestion (p. 437) that he is the astrologer of the Visconti is ingenious, but wholly gratuitous.

<sup>6</sup> (*Op. cit.*), pp. 133-138.

opinion a far less natural sense. In Petrarch's mind "patria" would only mean Florence, as we see from another letter of 1348,<sup>1</sup> which also shows that the old grudge against her for the banishment of Petracco was still active in the heart of his son. Certainly we have no proof that Pietro Alighieri was ever restored to Florence, but rather the contrary<sup>2</sup>; but Petrarch, who at the time had no personal acquaintance with him, may have drawn this wrong inference from the letter to which he is replying. There is no evidence whatever for de Sade's conjecture that Pietro was one of the four young Florentines (personally unknown to Petrarch), who urged him to visit Florence in 1348; in reality, Pietro was some years his senior and would be sure to meet him at Verona in this summer of 1345. Their common interest in Italian poetry should have drawn them together; for Pietro had written not only a commentary on his father's great poem, but also a Canzone on its condemnation by the Church.<sup>3</sup>

It is clear that Petrarch left Bologna for Verona as soon as his health permitted—probably some time in April—and remained there at least four (some say seven)<sup>4</sup> months. He must have been there for some time when he wrote his first letter to Cicero<sup>5</sup> on June 16; since at that date he had not only made the greatest literary "find" of his life—the letters of Cicero to Atticus<sup>6</sup>—but had had time to read them eagerly through and had begun the "huge" manuscript copy of them which, in spite

<sup>1</sup> F. VII. 10. "Mala et iniqua patriæ tractatio" (Frac. I. 377).

<sup>2</sup> He was included in the decree against his father of November, 1315, and he lived continuously at Verona from 1332, dying at Treviso about 1364. A. d'Avena published documents (Rome, 1906), which show that he could not have been at Florence in 1348, when de Sade (II. 440, 441) says he was restored. Carducci (p. 219, n.) says that he appears as a witness to a document there on January 21, 1324. But this supposed statement to P. may have been made on the information of friends.

<sup>3</sup> Unpublished when quoted by Carducci (p. 208) but since edited by G. Crocioni.

<sup>4</sup> Some think that he did not reach Avignon till November. See the discussion of the question in the next chapter (n. 3, p. 360).

<sup>5</sup> F. XXIV. 3 (translated below).

<sup>6</sup> M. de Nolhac says (*P. et l'Hum.* i. 255, 256) that his discovery embraced the sixteen books to Atticus, the three to Quintus Cicero, the correspondence of Cicero and Brutus and the apocryphal letter to Octavian. This is rendered certain by the contents of the Laurentian MS. XLIX. 18 (see below)—itself probably copied from P.'s autograph—and by the fact that P.'s friend Pastrengo in his encyclopædic work enumerates these items as constituting the correspondence of Cicero. The two

of his weak health, he made with his own hand.<sup>1</sup> He found them, he says, in "an unexpected place"; from which some have concluded that it was not in a library<sup>2</sup>; but a letter of Coluccio Salutati, who is likely to have known the facts, indicates that it was in the capitular library of the Duomo at Verona.<sup>3</sup> Possibly the contents of that library were mainly ecclesiastical and their number small, so that he began his search with little hope of unearthing so great a treasure.

The two chief collections of Cicero's letters—*Ad Atticum* and *Ad Familiares*—were both scarce books in the Middle Ages<sup>4</sup>; and although Petrarch may have seen some passages of the former in a "Florilegium," or book of classical extracts,<sup>5</sup> he may naturally have supposed that the correspondence as a whole was lost.<sup>6</sup> A tradition long prevailed in Italy that his discovery at Verona comprised both collections<sup>7</sup>; but this impression rested on a belief that two MSS. of the two collections respectively, still existing in the Laurentian Library at Florence, were his autograph copies. That hypothesis has long been abandoned. It is known that the *Ad Atticum* MS. at Florence<sup>8</sup> was copied for Salutati at Milan in 1392,<sup>8</sup> and that

friends knew nothing of the *Ad Familiares*. Mr. Hollway-Calthrop (p. 115) speaks mistakenly as if doubts were still admissible. Two German works by A. Viertel (1879) and O. E. Schmidt (1888) have finally settled it. Their main arguments are: (1) The history of the MSS.; and the facts—(2) that P. speaks in the Preface to F. (Frac. I. 18) of Cicero having few correspondents, whereas the *Ad Fam.* are addressed to about eighty; (3) that P.'s works show no acquaintance with the contents of the latter, which would have altered his view of the character of Cicero.

<sup>1</sup> See F. XXI. 10 (Frac. III. 87), "Volumen ingens. . . quod ipse olim manu propria. . . scripsi, adversâ tunc valetudine."

<sup>2</sup> So Viertel, evidently by mistake.

<sup>3</sup> De Nolhac (*P. et l'Hum.* I. 256), quoting from Novati's *Epistolario* of Coluccio (Rome, 1893, II. 483).

<sup>4</sup> Servatus Lupus had two copies of "Letters" at Ferrières in the ninth century (Letter 64, quoted in Sandys' *History of Classical Scholarship*, p. 470), but he does not specify which collection. If we judge from existing MSS. the *Ad Familiares* was certainly the more rare of the two.

<sup>5</sup> It is difficult to believe that all the citations from these epistles in P.'s letters before 1345 were interpolations of 1359. O. E. Schmidt supposes (p. 377) that P.'s find at Verona was not contained in a single MS. but in three.

<sup>6</sup> This we may conclude from his expression about the letters to Atticus in F. III. 18 (to Giovanni dell' Ancisa). See above, Chap. XII. p. 37.

<sup>7</sup> The erudite P. Vettori ("Victorius"), professor at Florence 1544-1585, was the first to crystallize this tradition; and his high authority was followed by Mehus and Bandini.

<sup>8</sup> Laur. M. XLIX. 18. These facts are proved by the correspondence



the *Ad Familiares* MS., which Petrarch never saw, was brought from Vercelli to Milan in 1389.<sup>1</sup> His Verona "original" of the first collection and the copy which he made from it have now alike disappeared; but independent MSS. have since been found in France, Germany, and Italy.

Such a discovery would be "an event" of the first magnitude in the life of any scholar; and Petrarch was one of the few men of his day capable of estimating its importance. It threw a flood of light upon the struggle between Cæsar and Pompey, and, above all, upon the personal character of Cicero himself. The latter was the subject which first engrossed Petrarch's attention; and it occurred to him that he might write a letter of remonstrance<sup>2</sup> to the orator in the shades below on the inconsistencies and infirmities of temper displayed in his correspondence. The idea was original—not suggested to him by any classical precedent. Of ancient writers Lucian alone, perhaps, possessed an imagination and a lightness of touch sufficient to execute the task with skill; and so far as we know, Petrarch had never heard his name. In our own days Mr. Andrew Lang has worked the vein with much success in his *Letters to Dead Authors*. But he acknowledges no debt to Petrarch, and indeed confesses that this method of criticizing the Immortals is "not greatly to his mind."<sup>3</sup> Petrarch was so taken with the idea that he indited a second and more complimentary letter to Cicero before the end of this year.<sup>4</sup> And at various times in the next fifteen years he addresses eight other famous men in the same way,<sup>5</sup> as Virgil and Horace (in verse), Seneca, Quintilian, Livy, Varro and—last but not least—Homer. The letters vary greatly in merit, but though sometimes in imitation of the writer addressed,<sup>6</sup> they are never "skits" upon his style,

of Coluccio with Pasquino Capelli, the chancellor of Milan, who had P.'s MS. copied for Coluccio. That MS. (probably No. 610 in the extant catalogue of the library at Pavia) disappeared after the French invasion in 1500.

<sup>1</sup> This MS. (M. XLIX. 7) was copied from the Vercelli original about the same time and by the same hands.

<sup>2</sup> *F.* XXIV. 3.

<sup>3</sup> *Letters to Dead Authors* (1892), p. vii.

<sup>4</sup> *F.* XXIV. 4, of December 19, 1345.

<sup>5</sup> In the Preface to *F.* (Frac. I. 25) he tells us that in 1359 he destroyed some of these letters to dead authors.

<sup>6</sup> The letter to Virgil (*F.* XXIV. 11) is in 65 hexameters; that to Horace (*F.* XXIV. 10)—a daring experiment—is an Ode to him in the "first Asclepiad metre"—that of *Ode* I. 1.

like the clever letter of Mr. Lang to Herodotus. They are the musings of a literary man upon the character and posthumous fame of his predecessors. I have translated the greater part of the letters to Cicero at the close of this chapter.

It is to the present visit to Verona that Petrarch refers in his *Letter to Posterity*,<sup>1</sup> where he says that he made a "long stay" in that city and was received with greater affection than he deserved. Perhaps this means that he did not live at an inn, but was successively the guest of his resident friends Azzo da Correggio, Guglielmo da Pastrengo, and Rinaldo da Villafranca. Nearly all his recent biographers assert that at this time he placed his son Giovanni at the grammar-school kept by the last-named.<sup>2</sup> The conjecture is really due to de Sade's erroneous chronology, according to which the poet was at Avignon in the beginning of this year and took his son back with him into Italy. It is not likely that Petrarch would leave for more than two years in a distant Italian school a child of only eight years old,<sup>3</sup> who, from his general backwardness seven years later,<sup>4</sup> could scarcely have begun his studies in grammar so soon. I am confident that his first entry into that school did not happen till early in 1348,<sup>5</sup> and that he first accompanied his father to Italy in November, 1347.

These spring and summer months must have been a time of intense labour at his Ciceronian manuscript, yet enlivened by cheerful converse with his literary friends. In a letter of six years<sup>6</sup> later he speaks of a three weeks' stay at Verona in May as "very pleasant, but rather tedious." A sojourn there at least five times as long, with the mechanical toil of deciphering and copying an ancient codex, must have awakened in him a

<sup>1</sup> *Ep. Post.* (Frac. I. 10).

<sup>2</sup> Baldelli (p. 202) simply repeats de Sade's statement without examination; so also does Fracassetti (*It.* i. 175, ii. 257), although in the last passage he seems conscious of the difficulties of chronology.

<sup>3</sup> For Giovanni's birth in 1337 see above, Chap. XIII. p. 54.

<sup>4</sup> See the letter *F.* XIII. 2, to Rinaldo (Frac. II. 215).

<sup>5</sup> In the above letter to Rinaldo of June 9, 1352, P. simply says that the boy was taken from his school while very young (probably in March, 1349), and (after an interval at Padua) sent to the school of Ghiberto at Parma. This would allow about a year for his first stay at Verona.

<sup>6</sup> *F.* XI. 6 (to Boccaccio) of June 1, 1351. P. there says that his stay at Verona was nearly a month, but he did not arrive till May 13 or 14.

keen desire for rural quiet and change of scene. I should, therefore, though with some hesitation, place in this summer a short excursion to the upper valley of the Adige, to which he alludes in a verse-letter to Pastrengo.<sup>1</sup> The opening lines may be taken to imply that he had tried to persuade the latter to accompany him, but without success. Petrarch refers to some gorge where the Adige makes a wide bend in its descent from "the steep threshold" of the mountains, and then to the great landslip in the Slavini di Marco twenty miles south of Trent between Ala and Roveredo, which had turned the river out of its course and caused the right bank to be invaded by shoals. This phenomenon had also struck Dante, who compares with it the entrance to the seventh Circle of his *Inferno*.<sup>2</sup> Petrarch refers, too, in obscure terms to some recent massacre of the local peasantry.<sup>3</sup> Probably the excursion lasted only a day or two and was not continued to Trent, which he does not mention. In default of better company he would be attended by one of his own servants.

During this summer, if Petrarch were the guest of his friends, it must have been a harassing problem for him to dispose of these attendants, of whom the Cardinal had given him for his Neapolitan journey more than he now needed. In a letter to Socrates, which from its place in the collection I should assign to this summer,<sup>4</sup> he humorously refers to his troubles with them, taking as his text the *Casina* of Plautus, where a slave calls his master "a hunter" because he "has a hound always at his heels."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ep. Metr.* III. 20. Magrini, following the recent suggestion of G. Gerola (*P. e Boccaccio nel Trentino*, Trent, 1903) believes that this letter belongs (like III. 19) to 1362, when P. was prevented by war from making a contemplated journey northward to Avignon. But his own account of his proceedings (in *Sen.* I. 3) gives no countenance to the view that he had actually started for the north; and even if he had, the valley of the Adige would have been a very roundabout route to Avignon. This letter plainly refers to a short excursion, and not to a long journey like that of 1356 to Prague.

<sup>2</sup> *Inferno*, XII. 4. Dr. Paget Toynbee (*Concise Dante Dict.* p. 529) says that this landslip occurred in 883; and he accounts for Dante's simile by his familiarity with the *De Meteoris* of Albertus Magnus, who there discusses the cause of this landslip. But surely Dante is likely to have seen or heard of it during his stay at Verona in Can Grande's court.

<sup>3</sup> I believe that the "insanus vates" of l. 18 is P. himself, but he does not say that his own progress was stopped by war.

<sup>4</sup> *F. V.* 14.

<sup>5</sup> The "hound" in Plautus was not a slave but the master's wife. P. says here that, many as had been the storms of his life, he had been kept from that "Charybdis" of marriage.



Petrarch turns the wit of Plautus' slave against the servants of his own household.

"Their name is 'servants,' but in fact they are 'hounds'—snappish, gluttonous, barking; I could put up with all but the last, for their barking is the greatest foe to the quiet that I seek. Of the whole 'pack,' two have become altogether insupportable; the rest I intend to endure for the present. One of the two I am sending to you to-day as the bearer of many letters from our friends here. Him you can either keep, if you want to become a 'hunter' yourself, or you can send him to the country, or to market—anywhere, so long as he never comes back to me. The other is that savage old fellow whom you know so well. I am ashamed to dismiss him, not on his own account so much as in consideration of his age and long service. And so, since the slave of Plautus makes me out a hunter, I will follow the example of all hunters of sense; I will not turn adrift an old dog, useless though he be from mange and decay, and besides, a most tiresome barker. But since I may not put him to flight, I will take flight myself, and leaving him in charge of my empty house, I will go elsewhere; but on that matter, as my mind is not yet made up, you will find my intentions in a more private letter. In short, according to my present plans, I shall be able to become a fisherman at the fount of the Sorgues<sup>1</sup>; at all events I will be a hunter no more, nor pass the rest of my life with hounds like these."

In the last two sentences, with characteristic indecision, Petrarch hints that he is returning to Provence, but announces in the same breath that his immediate destination is not yet fully fixed. The letter gives neither place nor date; but the arrangements as to his servant perhaps indicate that, since the siege of Parma had now been raised, he was able to pay a flying visit to that city and leave his house there in charge of his aged retainer.

It was not till eighteen months after his escape that the fate of Parma was finally decided. In 1345 Obizzo defended his new acquisition with spirit and success, and on April 4 he suppressed a rising of the Rossi party in the city in favour of Milan. With the help of Mastino and the Pepoli of Bologna he was able to

<sup>1</sup> M. de Nolhac (*P. et l'Hum.* I. 189), in quoting this letter, says that it was written "at Vaucluse" and dates it in 1347 or 1351. This sentence clearly shows that it was written, not at that place, but shortly before going there.

carry the war into the enemy's country and on June 26 he surprised Reggio, and almost took it by escalade. But in July, 1346 (a year later), he was suddenly deserted by his chief supporter. Mastino made a secret treaty with Milan and withdrew his troops ; and Obizzo was therefore compelled to sell Parma to the wily Luchino for about the same price that he had paid for it. Towards the end of that year a Milanese garrison was admitted into the city and destroyed the fortresses of those who had opposed the new lord.

## LETTERS

F. XXIV. 3.

*F. P. to Marcus Tullius Cicero, Greeting.*

“ Your letters, for which I have searched long and often, and have found where I least expected, I have now read through with the keenest interest. I have heard your voice. M. Tullius, in your ample talk, in your frequent lamentations, in your continual changes; and though I had long known you as an instructor of others, I have now at length discovered what you were in yourself. Listen, then, in your turn wherever you are, to this one word—I will not call it of advice—but of regret, proceeding from real affection in a man of a later age most attached to yourself, who utters it, not unaccompanied by tears. O soul ever restless and perturbed! or—to describe you in your own words—O ‘ old man rash and ill-fated!’<sup>1</sup> Why did you entangle yourself in so much contention, in such utterly profitless quarrels? Why did you forsake the leisure more suited to your age, your profession, your station in life? What false glitter of glory involved you during your declining years in the wars of younger men and hurried you through so many mischances to a death unworthy of a philosopher? Alas! heedless of your brother’s advice and of your own wholesome precepts—like some benighted traveller brandishing a light in the darkness<sup>2</sup>—you indicated a path for your followers in which you miserably fell yourself! I say nothing of Dionysius, of your own brother and nephew—or even of Dolabella—men whom you extol to the skies and then turn and rend with your curses. These inconsistencies might perhaps be borne. Julius Cæsar, too, I pass by, whose signal clemency gave an opening to those who were

<sup>1</sup> This is from the apocryphal letter to Octavian.

<sup>2</sup> It has been pointed out that this simile is remarkably like one in Dante (*Purg.* XXII. 67–69), where Statius says that Virgil by his fourth Eclogue showed his successors the way to Christianity (cf. V. Rossi, *Un paragone dantesco e petrarchesco*, in *Padova e F. P.*, 1904). Dr. E. Moore (*Studies in Dante*, First Series, 1896, pp. 293, 294) compares a famous passage in St. Augustine’s *Confessions* (IV. xvi.), from which he thinks Dante may have borrowed the idea; Rossi and de Nolhac (*P. et l’Hum.* i. 257, 258) think the same of P. But there is this difference, that in the latter passage Augustine is not himself carrying the light,



attacking him. Nor will I mention great Pompey, with whom by right of intimacy you could do as you chose. But what madness drove you to assail Antony? I suppose you would say 'love of the Republic,' though you confessed that it had already gone to utter ruin. But if you were impelled by the dictates of conscience or of liberty, why were you so intimate with Augustus? What answer could you give to your friend Brutus? 'If you are so fond of Octavius,' he said, 'you will give the impression not of avoiding all despotic masters, but of looking out for one of a more friendly type.'<sup>1</sup> There remains that last unhappy mistake, Cicero, that you abused this very man whom you had so praised, not because he was doing you any harm, but because he failed to prevent the harm-doers. I grieve, my friend, for your lot; I feel shame and pity for such sad mistakes; and, like Brutus himself, I place no confidence in those arts in which I know you were most proficient. What in the world is the good of teaching others—what avails it to be ever speaking of virtue in the most elegant terms, if meanwhile you pay no attention to your own words? Ah! how far better would it have been—for a philosopher especially—to have grown old in rural peace, while you meditated on that eternal existence (as you somewhere call it) and not on this our petty life; how far better to have held no high office, to have longed for no triumphs, to have had your gall excited by no Catilines. These, however, are vain regrets. Farewell for ever, my Cicero. Written in the land of the living, on the right bank of Athesis in Verona, a city of Italy beyond the Padus, on the 16th of June, in the 1345th year from the birth of that God, Whom you never knew."

## F. XXIV. 4.

*To the Same.*

"If my former letter offended you (for as you are wont to say with your friend in the *Andria* 'Complaisance begets friends, truth hatred')<sup>2</sup> accept something which may soothe your wounded feelings. Truth is not always hateful, since if we are angered by just censure, we are delighted at just praise.

<sup>1</sup> *Ad Brut.* 16.

<sup>2</sup> Terence, *Andria*, I. i. 41. Mr. Rolfe (*P., the First Modern Scholar*, New York, 1898, p. 249) strangely translates "familiaris" "contemporary," though Terence died more than fifty years before Cicero was born. It is impossible that P. could have meant "personal friend"; for he had read Suetonius' life of Terence, (*P. et l'Hum.* ii. 34) and had himself written a short biography of him (*ibid.* i. 191). He must, of course, be referring to Cicero's well-known admiration for this writer.

You will allow me to say, Cicero, that you lived like a (mere) man, you spoke like an orator, you wrote like a philosopher. It was your life that I censured—not your genius or your language; for the former fills me with admiration, the latter with amazement. Yet even in your life I find you lacking only in firmness, in that pursuit of peace required by your philosophic persuasion, and in avoidance of civil war; for freedom was already dead, and the funeral hymn of the Republic had been sung. See how differently I deal with you from your treatment of Epicurus in many places—especially in your book *De Finibus*. Everywhere, while you approve his life, you scorn his talents. In you I find no subject for scorn; yet—as I said—I pity your life, I applaud your ability and powers of speech. O supreme father of Roman eloquence! Not I alone, but all of us who deck ourselves with the flowers of the Latin tongue, pay you our thanks. With your streams we fertilize our meadows; you—we freely confess—are our guide, your opinions our support, your glory our illumination; in fine it is under your auspices that we have attained to such little ease and point in composition as we may possess. . . .<sup>1</sup>

“ . . . You have heard my opinion of your life and your powers. Would you like to hear what kind of fortune has attended your works—in what esteem they are held by ‘the general reader’ and by scholars? Certainly we have still some splendid volumes, which we have scarcely ‘grit’ enough to enumerate, much less to master their contents. Your reputation is world-wide, your name immense and far-resounding; but very rare are those who study you—whether because the

<sup>1</sup> P. maintains in the omitted passage that Virgil was the grand model in Latin poetry, as Cicero in prose. In support of this statement he cites Seneca, mentioning, on the latter’s own authority, that he was prevented not by difference of time, but by the civil wars, from personally knowing Cicero. It is thus clearly proved that P. confused the elder Seneca (the rhetor), who says this in his *Controversiæ* (I. præf. ii.), with his son (the philosopher). P. then gives an account (no doubt from Servius) on *Ecl.* VI. 10, 11) of the fabled meeting of Cicero with Virgil, when the orator spoke of the poet as “*magnæ spes altera Romæ*” and prophesied his future eminence. The same meeting is related in one of the five interpolated passages in the Bodleian MS. of Donatus’ life of Virgil (15th century). In proof that the *Æneid* excelled the *Iliad* (in which he is sure Cicero would agree) P. quotes Propertius’ distich:

“*Cedite Romani scriptores, cedite Graii  
Nescio quid majus nascitur Iliade.*”—(*Eleg.* II. xxxv. 65, 66.)

M. de Nolhac, in his 2nd ed. of *P. et l’Hum.* (i. 170–172) has removed the doubts which he expressed in his 1st (pp. 141, 142) as to P. having read Propertius. P. may have seen these lines in Donatus (ll. 102, 103, ed. Brummer), but in later life he certainly possessed a copy of the Elegies. Cruttwell, in his *Roman Literature* (p. 305), wrongly places their discovery in A.D. 1451.

times are adverse, or because men's wits are dull and slow, or—as I rather think—because the love of money forces their thoughts in other directions. And so some of your works are lost, I fear irreparably, to us who live now—greatly to my grief, greatly to the disgrace of our time, greatly to the injury of posterity. Not shame enough was it for us to neglect our own talents, so that no fruit should come to posterity through them; but we must needs injure the result of your labour, too, by an utterly cruel and intolerable want of care; for the ground of my complaint applies both to your works and to those of many famous men. Among your own, of which I am speaking now, the most serious losses are the following: the books on the *Republic*,<sup>1</sup> those on the care of the household,<sup>2</sup> on the art of war, on the praise of philosophy,<sup>3</sup> on Consolation, on Glory—though as to the last,<sup>4</sup> I feel a doubtful hope rather than an utter despair.<sup>5</sup> Aye, and we have lost large portions of the books that remain, so that, as if we were defeated in a great battle with sloth and forgetfulness, we must needs bewail our leaders, not merely as dead, but as wounded or missing. Such are the losses we have to suffer in many works—particularly in your *Orator*, your *Academica*, your *Laws*, which have suffered so much injury and damage that it would have been better for them to have perished outright.

“Finally, you may wish to know the present state of the city and republic of Rome—what your country looks like now, what concord prevails among the citizens, what people enjoy power, in whose hands and direction are placed the reins of empire. Are the Danube and the Ganges, the Ebro, the Nile, and the Don our boundaries at present? Has there arisen a man

‘The limits of whose victories  
Are Ocean, of his fame the skies,’<sup>6</sup>

or who

‘O’er Ind and Garamant extreme  
Shall stretch his boundless reign,’<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The first two books of this work, tolerably complete, were discovered by Angelo Mai at the Vatican early in the last century.

<sup>2</sup> By *De Re Familiari*, P. means Cicero’s translation of the *Æconomica* of Xenophon.

<sup>3</sup> Also called *Hortensius*, which P. once thought he had found. See *Sen.* XVI. 1 (Frac.) and the note to Chap. V. (Vol. I. p. 175).

<sup>4</sup> The Colbertin MS. alone has “his ultimis” for “hoc ultimo.” If that MS. be, as I suspect, earlier than the rest, the correction shows P.’s care.

<sup>5</sup> See Vol. I. p. 176.

<sup>6</sup> *Æn.* I. 287 (Conington).

<sup>7</sup> *Æn.* VI. 794 (Conington).



as your Mantuan friend puts it ? I imagine you would be eager to hear these and such like things ; your devotion, your notorious patriotism, which was your destruction, is enough to prove it. And yet I had far better say nothing. Believe me, Cicero, if you were to hear of our condition to-day, your tears would fall fast, whatever be the region of Heaven or Hell that you inhabit. Farewell for ever.

“ In the land of the living, on the left bank of Rhodanus in Transalpine Gaul on December 19th, of the same year.”

## CHAPTER XIX

### SECOND SOJOURN AT VAUCLUSE. THE ECLOGUES

(1345-1347)

WHILE Parma remained "an apple of discord" to the princelings of Northern Italy, Petrarch could never find there the quiet indispensable to his literary work. His resolve of the previous year to remain permanently in Italy was seriously shaken by the long struggle for the lordship of the city; and there are indications that pressure from his friends at Avignon was not lacking. In a sonnet addressed (ostensibly)<sup>1</sup> to Cardinal Colonna, he reiterates his devotion to his lord and his love for "his lady"; and in a similarly rhymed reply,<sup>2</sup> dated June 23, his confidant Sennuccio asserts that while the Cardinal eagerly desired his return, his protracted absence was arousing in "Laura" a mixture of grief and anger. The last detail was possibly due to his correspondent's imagination; but whether true or false, it was an argument calculated to shake him out of his indecision. The time of his departure is often said to have been the end of November<sup>3</sup>; but though absolute proof is

<sup>1</sup> S. 227 ("Signor mio caro"). This is the sonnet which P. has placed by inadvertence (as M. Cochin supposes, *Chron. du Canz.* p. 124) near the opening of his Second Part in his "definitive copy" (Vat. No. 3195, see Vol. I. pp. 256, 275, n.). Mestica says (pp. 266, 373) that in the "autograph draft" (Vat. No. 3196, *ibid.*), P. has written his own sonnet on the right-hand page of the first sheet along with the sonnet by Sennuccio next mentioned. It was probably sent in the first instance to the latter, but was meant to be shown to the Cardinal.

<sup>2</sup> This is the sonnet "Oltra l'usato modo," printed in the *Giunta al P.* (Soave, ii. p. 178). Soave supposes that P.'s is the reply, and I am far from certain that he is wrong; but de Sade (ii. 231), Cochin (*loc. cit.*) and Mestica (p. 373) take the opposite view. It is generally held to be inferior to his best, which may be due to his replying (according to custom) with the same rhymes used by Sennuccio.

<sup>3</sup> So de Sade (II. 239), and the more recent biographers follow as usual in his wake. E. Calvi (*Bibliografia analitica Petrarcesca*, Rome, 1904, p. 55) says that Nino Quarta (in *Roma Letteraria*, I. 1893) "proves" that P. returned to Provence at the end of November, 1345. I have vainly sought for this article in English libraries; but I fail to see that such "proof" is possible. Baldelli (p. 309, n. 2) long ago suggested that *F.*

perhaps impossible, I am convinced that the journey took place about three months sooner. It is true that the first certain date in Provence is that of the second letter to Cicero (December 19, 1345). But there is a verse-letter from Vaucluse to the Bishop of Cavaillon, which was evidently written before he had heard of the murder of Andrew at Aversa<sup>1</sup>; and since that tragedy was known at Avignon in the first week of October, we may fairly conclude that the verses were composed in September. They also show that they were written in the fruit-season, when he could still employ his leisure in catching fish from the Sorgues.

I should therefore confidently place his return at the end of August or the beginning of September; and an affectionate letter from his friend Pastrengo<sup>2</sup> at Verona describes the first stage of his journey.

"You remember that day on which, after leaving my Verona, you reached the strong and finely situated town of Peschiera,<sup>3</sup> which is washed on its eastern side by the Mincio, fresh from its parent Benacus,<sup>4</sup> winding through its gay pastures. There, after a good supper, we rested and spent a great part of the night in delightful talk. When morning broke, we mounted our steeds before the dawn had fully raised its quivering beams. There was no bright patch in the sky; the light was subdued by a roof of cloud. When we passed the circuit of the walls and took to the fields, suddenly there burst upon our view on one side the calm surface of Benacus, on the other the Licanian forest with its spreading glades; and though you wished to speed on your journey, yet either the beauty of the view or the thought of the pleasant friend you were leaving made you slacken your pace. When we came to the spot where a low bank separates the Veronese from the Brescian border, you drew rein<sup>5</sup> and flinging

VI. 2 (to G. Colonna di San Vito), which is dated "November 30th, in travelling," refers to this journey. Yet P. states in *F.* XXIII. 12, that San Vito died "not long after" his last interview with him in October, 1343; and Fracassetti (*Adnot. in F. P.* p. 38) places his death within the next few months. And in the same letter P. alludes to *F.* VI. 3 as composed before his 1343 journey ("postea," *Frac.* III. 221) so that all the letters to San Vito in *F.* VI. must be chronologically out of place.

<sup>1</sup> *Ep. Metr.* I. vi. H. Cochin (on the *Ep. Metr.* in *Giorn. Storico della Lett. Ital.* t. LXXIV. 1919) says that this letter, though not found in the MSS. of *Ep. Metr.*, belongs plainly to 1345.

<sup>2</sup> Printed among the *Epistolæ Variæ* in the B. ed. (p. 1127).

<sup>3</sup> This is here latinized as "Pischeria"; but the ancient name is now known from inscriptions to have been "Ardelica."

<sup>4</sup> The Lago di Garda.

<sup>5</sup> The folio text is "continuisti animam, for which I conjecture "animal" or a similar word.



your arms round my neck uttered these parting words: 'I am torn from you, dear fellow, to dwell in a foreign clime, perhaps never to see you more, but my love will remain ever faithful; our friendship will be unaffected by time or distance,<sup>1</sup> I am yours and you mine. Farewell, beloved; think on me, as I on you.'<sup>2</sup> At this farewell you could not restrain your tears; and I, weeping, heart-sore, half-distraught, could do no more than just assent. We parted; I could hardly take my eyes off you as you receded from view, though my companions chid me for the delay; and then I thought over all our pleasant converse.

"When night arrived to soothe my melancholy, I could find no rest or sleep. In thinking on your journey my fancy dwelt on the treacherous weather, the rough climbs, the slippery descents, on avalanches,<sup>3</sup> swamps, storms and floods; and I consoled myself in these forebodings by saying: 'He has good health and strength; he is in the flower of his age and his spirit is high; to courage all obstacles give way.' Now, released from all such troubles, you have conquered the Alps and frequent the society of the Sacred College; to one you uncover and give way; to another you rise and offer your hand or sometimes (in our Italian fashion) your cheek. Or again you find time for the services in our St. Agricol; you wander in your Elysian haunts, tending the sacred Laurel near the Paphian Column<sup>4</sup> and rejoicing in its shade. So do I rejoice, and feel the keenest pleasure without a touch of envy. Farewell and be happy, my dearest friend."

From this letter it is plain that Petrarch chose the more direct Alpine route—probably through Milan, Novara, Vercelli and Turin to the pass of Mont Genèvre<sup>5</sup>; he did not take the longer coast road through Genoa, as he did two years later in the fall of the year. By the first route he could travel through Gap to Vaucluse without entering Avignon; but he would doubtless visit the Cardinal and his many friends there soon after his arrival. He found to his regret that his friend and feudal lord, the Bishop of Cavaillon, was still absent in Naples; and he composed the following verse-letter in rhymed hexameters<sup>6</sup> in the hope of inducing him to relinquish his thankless mission and return home.

<sup>1</sup> This is plainly the meaning, but the printed text is untranslatable.

<sup>2</sup> This is printed as a pentameter quotation ("Sit tibi cura mei; sit mihi cura tui"), but I do not know its provenance.

<sup>3</sup> So I understand "ohruta nivium"; perhaps Prof. N. Quarta, who believes in a winter journey, would render "snow-storms."

<sup>4</sup> A curious epithet for the Cardinal! But it is in Pastrengo's manner; he wants to display his knowledge that there was a temple of Venus at Paphos.

<sup>5</sup> In the Cottian Alps, 6560 feet high; it was the route which he took on his last journey to Italy in the spring of 1353.

<sup>6</sup> This poem is not in Rossetti's MS., nor in any MS. of the metrical

" By civic broils from Italy exiled  
 Hither I fled. Though almost reconciled <sup>1</sup>  
 To gain my groves, my streams, my rural bliss,  
 Yet most of all my faithful friends I miss.  
 Glad though I be to reach the well-known spot,  
 No pleasure's quite the same where they are not.  
 Yet, unless fate has some surprise in store,  
 My youth's sweet haunts I vow to leave no more,  
 Resolved to pass the short remains of life  
 In thy retreat, secure from war and strife.  
 Here, revered Philip, shall my country be,  
 Here my Mount Helicon, my Castalie ;  
 Here am I fain to rest my weary Muse ;  
 Here, too, I count on thee ; make no excuse.  
 If books can give thee some respite from care  
 And free my sleep from dreams of horrid war,  
 Here shalt thou Naples, I my Parma find,  
 Where no drums beat, where lurks no ambush blind.  
 Let Wealth her votaries take, I choose repose ;  
 A poet's bliss none but a poet knows.  
 (I need not blush so high a rôle to claim,  
 For crowds, unblushing, arrogate the name.)  
 Wilt thou ne'er rest from honour's panting race,  
 Hastening forth, soon to return apace ?  
 While your worn keel furrows the ocean's foam,  
 Think'st thou not death may part thee from thy home ?  
 Know'st thou not royal favour's shifting sand,  
 How jostling suitors round its threshold stand ?  
 Stay, I entreat, this bad world's tempests flee,  
 While homing winds attend thee on the sea.  
 Here, trust me, father, shalt thou find true calm,  
 'Tis thy home calls—home and its wonted balm !  
 Let shivering misers hug superfluous gold ;  
 Its shining glitter spreads for us lures untold.  
 Here we have raiment, but no curtains fine,  
 Nourishing food, not pampering courses nine ;  
 No couch with ivory steps we here prepare,  
 But rest for limbs wearied with daily care ;  
 No purple coverings our apartments deck,  
 Nor floors of snow-white marble without speck ;  
 Here wilt thou find no pearls, nor costly dyes,  
 But fresh, green turf, gemmed by the river's rise ;  
 Here thou, so richly gifted by heaven's hand,  
 May bring, I trust, thy frail bark safe to land.  
 Death's sure approach bids me not aim too high,  
 Content with what my gardens small supply.

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letters (*v. Cochin, op. cit.* n. 1, p. 361) ; but P. may have excluded it because of its rhymes. But wherever the folio editors found it, there can be no question of its genuineness, nor indeed of its date. Diana Magrini (p. 77) refers it to the summer of 1346, forgetting that by that time the Bishop of Cavaillon had long returned to his diocese. She adds (p. 78) that in the Venice and Basle folios it is found also among the *Variae* but this is certainly incorrect as regards the Basle edition of 1554.

<sup>1</sup> The original (which I paraphrase) "*partimque volens, partimque coactus*" illustrates P.'s characteristic indecision.

In these some old shrubs, set in the grassy lea,  
 Now need replacing—so in time shall we ;  
 Till that time comes, which is youth's utmost dread,  
 Here may I rest, here lay my whitening head.  
 Now, while fruit-boughs o'erarch with grateful shade,  
 With hook and line we ply the fisher's trade.  
 Such plenty on the board Vaucuse can place—  
 Peaches and pears the second course to grace.  
 Bid thy attendants—man-at-arms and page—  
 Supply such dainties to thy green old age !  
 This woodland note, great Sir, thy friend erstwhile  
 Writes, who is Sorga's pilgrim or exile."

That these verses were no mere poetic exercise, never actually sent to the Bishop, may be concluded from a prose note which follows them in an early manuscript<sup>1</sup> ; " Your Francesco sends his humble and devoted remembrances. If I were writing to any but my own special lord, I should have rewritten and almost entirely erased much of this ; but in addressing you, my lord, my concern is with the matter, not with the style." We may take the words as an apology for using rhyme, which Petrarch of course knew to be unclassical<sup>2</sup> ; and this was doubtless the reason for his exclusion of the poem from the metrical collection which he afterwards dedicated to Barbato. There is no sign that he knew anything of the awful event, which made all the Bishop's labours fruitless and must have wounded him to the quick.

It is stated by some writers<sup>3</sup> that the Bishop quitted Naples about the time of the arrival of the Legate, Cardinal Aimeric, in the previous year (May, 1344), and that he returned thither as Papal Nuncio in February, 1345, at the special request of Queen Joan. It is true that Clement's supersession of the Regency-Council by his Legate might seem to betray a want of confidence in the Bishop as the representative of the Church on that Council. But Philip was also Vice-Chancellor of the realm ; and it is not likely that he would throw up that office from personal pique at a time when his knowledge of the cabals at court

<sup>1</sup> This is No. 668 (miscellaneous) in the Riccardian Library at Florence. Magrini conjectures (p. 79) that the transcription of the note is an indication that the copy was made from P.'s autograph.

<sup>2</sup> He employs it, however, in the *vers d'esprit* to Pastrengo (Chap. XIII. p. 84), in the lines on Guardasone (Chap. XV. p. 168) and in his own epitaph—if that be his, which, in spite of Vergerio's statement, I cannot believe.

<sup>3</sup> See Christophe (II. 118) who gives minute details of Philip's reception. These are taken from two histories of Provence (by Bouche and Nostradamus) which are not original authorities, and Nostradamus is notoriously untrustworthy.



must have been of supreme value to the Legate. Moreover, the Nuncio succeeding Aimeric (whose appointment had only been for a few months) was not Philip, but Amici, Bishop of Chartres, to whom a Papal letter was addressed (January 30, 1345), directing him to remove certain courtiers from the Queen's entourage because they had fomented dissension between her and her consort. In this letter was enclosed a circular, addressed to members of the royal family and to certain notables of the realm (of whom the Bishop of Cavaillon was one), requesting them to see that this measure was carried out.<sup>1</sup> The courtiers referred to were those very members of the household, who were afterwards found guilty of the murder of Andrew. Since these personages seem to have treated the Legate with scarcely veiled hostility, this step may have been taken by his advice on the occasion of his relinquishing his post.<sup>2</sup>

The mission of the Cardinal-Legate had not brought calm to the electric atmosphere of the Neapolitan Court. When Petrarch left it in December, 1343, Elizabeth, the Queen-Mother of Hungary, was still there, plotting to have her son crowned as King-regnant along with his wife; but she apparently returned home before the Legate arrived.<sup>3</sup> She must have been aware that her schemes were opposed by a strong party at court, which she fancied was supported by Joan herself; and it is even said that, in her apprehension for Andrew's safety, she wished to take him back with her to Hungary, but was dissuaded by the entreaties of the Queen. The ill-will between the Hungarian and the Angevin parties was apparently accentuated by the Legate's coming. The Hungarians, now reinforced by the Pipini (who owed their liberation to Andrew's agency), were extremely obsequious to the Cardinal; the Neapolitans, who suspected that the Curia had been bought by Hungarian gold,<sup>4</sup> treated him with

<sup>1</sup> Baddeley, p. 335. If his date be correct, it amounts to a disproof of Christophe's statement.

<sup>2</sup> The Pope's letter removing him from his post is dated November 19, 1344 (Mollat, p. 185). But from a letter as to his salary a month later (December 19) it is plain that he was still at Naples; he must therefore have left early in January.

<sup>3</sup> Mollat, who is demonstrably inaccurate in recording these events, says (p. 185) that she did not go to Naples till July, 1344. (But see above, Chap. XVII. p. 289.) On February 25, 1344, Joan directed that galleys should be in readiness to convey Elizabeth home across the Adriatic.

<sup>4</sup> Albert of Strasburg says that the sum actually paid at Avignon was

marked coolness. The Bishop of Cavaillon, who was behind the scenes, knew that the Pope did not mean to gratify Hungary in this matter. But he would see that the very suspicion was an element of danger ; and it may have been by his advice that Joan was crowned alone at the end of August, 1344, with Andrew as a mere spectator, and that the coronation of the latter as titular King-consort was postponed for a time. When the Cardinal returned to Avignon early in 1345, he moved in consistory that the second ceremony should take place ; and instructions were sent to the Bishop of Chartres to anoint and crown Andrew on September 20. The relations between the consorts were apparently less strained during that summer. The Queen was about to become a mother ; and she must have known that the Hungarian scheme to place the authority in her husband's hands had been foiled. Andrew, however, imagined that his power would be increased by his coronation. Knowing the activity of his enemies, he boasted that they should soon feel his hand ; he even had a banner painted on which were depicted an axe and a stake, as if to warn them of their approaching fate.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps it was these foolish threats which moved the Pope to exhort him in a letter of September 21—written three days after his murder—to put away childish things. His enemies in the royal household, perhaps knowing nothing of the limitations to be placed on his authority, were driven to desperation and resolved to compass his destruction.

The court had moved to Aversa, ten miles from Naples, to enjoy the pastime of hunting. Late on the night of Sunday, September 18, Andrew was called from the royal bedchamber on the pretext that important dispatches had arrived from the capital.<sup>2</sup> He was then suddenly seized and strangled, and his body left hanging from a gallery and bearing marks of atrocious

80,000 gold florins (Baddeley, p. 321) ; Christophe (ii. 121) states the sum as 44,400 marks of silver.

<sup>1</sup> This statement is made even by D. de Gravina—a contemporary, but inaccurate, chronicler, extremely partial to the Hungarian party (*Chronicon*, cap. 18, Naples, 1890, p. 24). Boccaccio also, in his fourth Eclogue, speaks of Andrew as "too harsh" (*nimum durus*).

<sup>2</sup> This message was brought by Tommaso Mambriccio, a chamberlain—the person mentioned below as punished by his own associates. The contemporary scandal that Joan closed her door so as not to hear Andrew's cries and that she herself wove the cord by which he was strangled is countered by the Modenese chronicler's statement that she was considered "guiltless and free from blame."

cruelty. It was there discovered by his Hungarian nurse ; for the soldier body-guard, which should have protected him, had drowned their senses in wine. The mystery of this murder has never been fully solved. Scandalmongers in other countries (above all in Hungary)—but not, it would seem, in her own realm <sup>1</sup>—pointed to the Queen as an accomplice before the fact. In our day she has found able defenders ; indeed in her own those who were best able to judge acquitted her of all criminal intent, though she may have vaguely guessed that some plot was brewing. There is no sign that Petrarch and Boccaccio, who knew her personally, ever doubted her innocence. The tragedy left her in a most cruel position. Surrounded by enemies, with no real power in her hands (for she was still a minor under the tutelage of the Holy See),<sup>2</sup> scarcely able to distinguish friend from foe, she was left to brave the taunts and insinuations of a suspicious world. In spite of the prurient tales of her own day, there is no evidence that Joan was either vicious or heartless. She was fond of pleasure and gay society ; she was married for state reasons to a boorish youth whom she frankly confessed she did not love <sup>3</sup> ; but she was not lacking in force of character or even in religious principle. The statement of Villani—still often repeated <sup>4</sup>—that she was already enamoured of her cousin Louis of Taranto merely retails the Italian gossip of the time and is not confirmed by impartial authorities.

The crime caused the utmost consternation in Naples. The courtier, who had summoned Andrew from his chamber and who had a private grudge against him, was caught and executed without trial—a measure possibly due to the lively conviction that

<sup>1</sup> Mollat asserts that the Naples populace in February, 1346, uttered threatening cries against her (p. 186). They were excited at the delay of justice ("not undeservedly so," as Joan herself reports, Baddeley, p. 366, n.) ; but there is no proof that her people seriously connected her with the crime.

<sup>2</sup> Mollat implies (p. 185) that her minority was declared at an end with the Legate's departure. But Baddeley states (p. 332) that she declined to interfere with the provisions of her grandfather's Will ; and it is plain from Clement's letter of December, 1344, that she was still to be considered a minor till her twenty-fifth year.

<sup>3</sup> In her Avignon defence (1348) she confessed to an antipathy to Andrew which she ascribed to some magical power independent of her own will.

<sup>4</sup> Lib. XII. cap. 98. It is repeated by Christophe (ii. p. 129) and J. F. André (p. 313).



"dead men tell no tales."<sup>1</sup> Joan has been unjustly accused of neglecting for months to bring the murderers to justice. Yet she could not act without her Council; and that body was paralysed by a fear, which was only too well founded,<sup>2</sup> that high personages were involved in the plot. The Nuncio did little or nothing<sup>3</sup>; and the Councillors, in spite of popular clamour, were compelled to await orders from Avignon. Meanwhile the Hungarian retinue of Andrew set off homewards and spread their dark suspicions like wild fire throughout the peninsula.

The Pope and Curia, however, were hardly less perturbed than the authorities on the spot. Clement wrote kindly to Joan, and at the same time informed the King of Hungary that judicial retribution for the crime belonged exclusively to the Holy See. He thus relieved the Queen of the task of instituting a court of inquiry; but he failed to see that, in justice to her, instantaneous action was imperative. He appointed two Cardinals to act with plenary authority; but these prelates were also entrusted with earlier duties in Northern Italy. One of them<sup>4</sup> never reached Naples at all, the other only in August, 1346—eleven months after the crime! It is patent that the Curia shamefully mismanaged the whole affair. Its alleged excuse—that owing to the Anglo-French war few qualified Legates were available—is simply an admission that the over-centralized Papacy was unable to cope with the world-wide responsibilities which it was so eager to assume. Meantime affairs at Naples were allowed to drift, while the wrath of Hungary steadily rose, until early in the next year (1346) Clement was compelled to commission Bertrando del Balzo, Grand Justiciary of Naples, with two citizen assessors to hold an inquiry into the crime.

What impression did this tragedy make upon Petrarch with his intimate knowledge of the Neapolitan court? Not long after

<sup>1</sup> His tongue was torn out on September 20 by Charles Artois and Gasso, Count of Terlizzi (both subsequently implicated in the murder), and he was immediately executed (Baddeley, p. 347).

<sup>2</sup> Charles Artois was Chancellor and a member of the Council, and he possibly had behind him the sinister figure of Catherine of Taranto (see below).

<sup>3</sup> Christophe states (ii. 123) that he returned forthwith to Avignon; but he was certainly at Naples in February, 1346 (Baddeley, p. 365).

<sup>4</sup> This was the Cardinal of San Clemente; the other—Bertrand of Embrun, Cardinal of San Marco—was so ill received that soon after his arrival he had to retire to Benevento.

the news arrived, he wrote a letter <sup>1</sup> to Barbato, which shows traces, in my opinion, of having been touched up, if not entirely rewritten, at a later time. It is a rhetorical effusion, throwing no light whatever on the causes or authors of the murder, but referring complacently to his own forebodings of ill. I shall therefore cite only the latter portion, omitting some of the fulsome adulation of his deceased patron, the late King.

“ . . . Who has not foreseen these calamities, and of what use has the foresight been ? . . . If I mistake not, no single man has expressed his fears more openly than I, or grieved for them more freely. None has examined more closely these portents of the court, or has more severely lashed them with tongue and pen. . . . You remember, my friend, how, when present long ago both before and after the death of the King (who alone deserved the name) and also in absence, I expressed my sentiments both by word and letter in sure and sad foreboding of what was to come. I saw the very foundations of the realm undermined ; I had before my eyes its imminent fall. I confess I did not foresee that the head of this innocent youth would be the first to suffer from the ruin. In my gloomy conjectures there was something that hid the worst evil of all ; though I seem to remember that in an early letter to you I spoke of him with only too sure an augury as a lamb exposed to wolves.<sup>2</sup> Of course I had in mind the rending and fury of wolves—those attacks that are the resource of abandoned wretches—contempt, envy, hatred, craft, rapine, poison or exile. Such a death for such a man I could neither imagine nor fear ; for not even in tragedy could I have called to mind a plot so nefarious and savage. . . .

“ O Naples, so soon and so vastly changed ! O unhappy Aversa, well art thou named ! ‘ Averse,’ as I call thee, from all humanity and good faith—for thou owedst the first to a mere man, the second to thy King and just lord ; yet thou spurnest both alike, thou hast broken the pact with both, held sacred by mankind. . . . Against no ordinary person hast thou dared this crime, but hast most foully torn thine own lord, the mildest and most innocent of men—a youth and King of rare gifts and promise, who loved thee and sought thy welfare. Nay, it is not thou,

<sup>1</sup> *F. VI. 5.* This letter is dated “ Kalendis Sextilibus ” (July 1), nearly nine months after the murder ! Its contents prove, however, that it was written when the news was fresh, and before P. was aware what measures of justice would be taken. It also speaks of his return to Provence as recent ; de Sade is therefore clearly right in supposing (II. 253, n.) the date to be a copyist’s error. I suggest that P. wrote “ A.D. sext Kal. Nov.” (October 27) since the news was known in Avignon before October 10.

<sup>2</sup> *F. V. I.*, quoted above, p. 286.

but the fierce and cruel in thee—shall I call them men or beasts, or some outlandish kind of monster? They have stained the Italian world by their savage barbarity; they have destroyed their own monarch and thine, not by the sword or poison—the hard, yet common lot of kings—but by an infamous noose, as though he were a brigand or incendiary. Round the head, whose due and expected diadem they had long delayed by traitorous subterfuge, they have thrown the shameful band of a rope. I pass over the abominable insults done to the corpse so unworthy of such treatment, in the hope that the knowledge of them may by our silence be withheld from our children. . . . But thou, Robert, chief of kings of our day, who (I could well believe) seest and pitiest our state from some region of heaven, with what feelings didst thou behold this outrage! . . . Ah, the anguish of it! That sweet, dear and noble pledge of thine, which thou leftest to be preserved and tended, these men have destroyed—not from sloth or torpor, but from motives of bitter hatred and envy. O for justice, the avenger of crime! Neither his innocence, nor lineage, nor majesty availed him; neither man, nor god, nor even what should have been most effectual—the remembrance of thee—came to his aid. Those last words and warnings of thine, by which at thy death thou didst provide, so far as mortal could, for thy family and realm have been borne away by a blast of headlong and desperate villainy, and buried in oblivion of all divine law! . . .

“May all turn out better than I expect, and may the fury of a few, which will not go unavenged, I presume, by those whose business it is, fail to injure the welfare of the State! For though God’s justice often incline to mercy, this is only for those who repent of their transgression, not for those who glory in their crime. These lines I write to you from the Sorgues fount, whither I have fled as to a haven, from the wreck of Italy’s fortunes, filled with grief for the past and trepidation for the future.”

This letter was plainly written when the ghastly details of the murder, but not the ramifications of the plot, had become known at Avignon. Petrarch gives no hint of his suspicions as to the identity of the assassins; but his insistence on “envy” as their motive leaves little doubt of his conviction that the royal houses of Taranto and Durazzo were implicated in the crime. He appears to know nothing of the machinations of the Hungarian court to have Andrew recognized as sovereign in his own right, nor of the determination of the Holy See to defeat them at all costs. He even speaks of the guilty parties as directly responsible for the delay in Andrew’s coronation, which was assuredly not



the fact; and his final assertion—which may be a rhetorical flourish—that they “gloried in their crime” would seem to mean that he thought it was a “State conspiracy,” and not—as in truth it was—the desperate act, carefully concealed, of a sordid household cabal. It is a curious omission that he does not even allude to his own friend, the Bishop of Cavaillon, or to the extremely difficult situation in which he was now placed. Within a few months the Bishop must have opened his eyes considerably as to the ambitions of Andrew’s family and the indiscretions of his supporters at court.

That gentle prelate did not at once desert Queen Joan in her extremity, as he would doubtless have done had he believed her guilty. He remained at Naples three months, but had no power to prevent the chaos into which the administration was drifting. When he left it on December 23, his probable object—knowing as he did the dilatory methods of the Curia—was to impress upon the Pope the infinite peril of delay in bringing the criminals to justice. The Bishop had but just started by sea when his vessel was driven back by a storm to the port of Ercolano; there he learnt by courier that the Queen had brought forth a son on Christmas Day, and that she earnestly desired his return. He suspended his journey, and represented the Pontiff, who had promised to be godfather, at the baptism of the infant under the name of Carlo Martello. He then re-embarked, and after another stormy passage to Marseilles,<sup>1</sup> proceeded to Avignon to make his report to the Curia.

From subsequent Papal letters to Joan it appears that he convinced the Pope of the Queen’s innocence of all complicity in the murder. To him, too, may have been due the immediate appointment of the Justiciary to hold an inquiry. This official was bidden to investigate even the conduct of the Queen and of the royal princes and to send his conclusions under the strictest secrecy; but eventually he had to confess that he could not execute this part of his instructions. Before his commission—indeed soon after the Bishop’s departure—the royal princes of Taranto and Durazzo, moved by popular excitement, took the law into their own hands, and having arrested Raimondo di

<sup>1</sup> De Sade (II. 251, n.) says that he obtained these particulars of the voyage from the Bishop’s (still unpublished) MS. life of St. Mary Magdalene, to whose intercession he attributed his deliverance in these storms.

Catania, Seneschal of Castel Nuovo, during Joan's accouchement, put him to the torture. His confessions implicated not only Philippa Catanese, formerly the Queen's house-mistress (by general consent the "villain of the piece") and her whole family, who had been ennobled and promoted during the late reign, but also Charles Artois, the natural son of Robert, who by his will had been constituted a member of the Council. When the Justiciary began his belated inquiry, these persons (Artois excepted) were tried and executed with revolting cruelty. Artois fled to his castle in the country, where he was besieged and taken by his liege-lady, Catherine of Taranto<sup>1</sup> and her sons, who, despite injunctions from the Pontiff and his Legate, refused to deliver him up to justice.<sup>2</sup> This lady, though not implicated in the criminals' confession, is consequently still suspected of having been privy to the plot. Whether her sons, Robert and Louis, were also involved is not so clear; but there can be no question that she was intriguing in the early months of 1346 to secure the Queen's hand for the former. That prince established himself in the Castel Nuovo against Joan's will<sup>3</sup> and terrorized her into requesting from the Pope a dispensation for her marriage with him, although his younger brother Louis had succeeded in gaining her affections.

These sinister proceedings naturally incensed the Hungarian court, which openly accused the whole royal family, including the Queen, of complicity in Andrew's murder. They also clamoured for the custody of the infant heir to the throne, alleging that his safety was imperilled by his remaining in his mother's charge. The Pope, convinced of Joan's innocence and aware that the people would resent the child's removal, resisted these demands and entrusted him to the care of his Nuncios, the Bishops of Padua<sup>4</sup> and Monte Cassino. There is some likelihood that Louis of Hungary would have invaded Naples much sooner, if he had not been embroiled at the moment with the Republic of

<sup>1</sup> He was the feudal tenant of Catherine, who was daughter of Charles of Valois and (through her mother, Catherine Courtenay) titular Empress of Constantinople. Mollat (pp. 183-187) incorrectly speaks of this lady herself as "Catherine Courthenay."

<sup>2</sup> This was in the spring of 1346. Catherine died in October of the same year.

<sup>3</sup> Joan could only get rid of him by closing the gates against him, when he left the castle to attend his mother's funeral.

<sup>4</sup> This was P.'s friend, Ildebrandino Conti, now 84 years of age.

Venice. When it became clear to him that Joan intended to give her hand to Prince Louis of Taranto,<sup>1</sup> whom he regarded as the prime mover in his brother's murder, he openly prepared, in defiance of Clement's emphatic protest, to invade the Papal fief of Naples in order to wreak vengeance upon the murderers. These events belong to the year 1347, when Petrarch, as we shall shortly see, was employed in a last vain attempt to stay the invader's progress. The subsequent incidents of the long drama—the escape of the Queen and her husband to Provence, her personal pleading and acquittal before the consistory, and her triumphant return—took place during the poet's absence in Italy; and his letters contain few, if any, references to this chain of events.

There is evidence that Petrarch spent the Christmas of 1345 at Avignon.<sup>2</sup> In face of the Neapolitan tragedy the Pope might wish to have at hand, until the Bishop of Cavaillon's return, one who had so recently acted as his own unofficial envoy at that court.<sup>3</sup> The prelate apparently arrived before the end of January; and about the same time<sup>4</sup> an offer was made to the poet, which might have changed the whole course of his life, had he chosen to accept it. The office of Apostolic Secretary, which was highly paid and frequently led to a bishopric, was vacant and Clement pressed Petrarch to undertake the post. To the astonishment of all his friends and the indignation of some—including, no doubt, Cardinal Colonna, who may have recommended him<sup>5</sup>—he firmly and respectfully declined it. He told

<sup>1</sup> Christophe (ii. 129, followed by Joudou, i. 268) makes the strange mistake of dating the Queen's second marriage just a year too early (August 20, 1346), whereas it actually took place on August 22, 1347, and by the anger which it produced in Hungary undoubtedly hastened the invasion. This historian, who takes the worst view of the Queen's character, says that she did not even wait for the Papal dispensation for her marriage with her cousin. The secret promise of it (which was taken as a dispensation) is dated June 21, 1347, and must have been received some weeks before the wedding, which could not otherwise have been celebrated.

<sup>2</sup> The second letter to Cicero is dated at Avignon, December 19, 1345.

<sup>3</sup> De Sade even thinks that he finds traces of P.'s hand in Clement's bull of February 1, 1346, anathematizing the assassins (II. 253, n.).

<sup>4</sup> Fracassetti in his chronological table (*It.* i. 175) places the offer in 1346, though in the note to which he there refers (*ibid.* iii. 216) he fixes it in 1347, relying on a date of his own (iv. 318) for a letter to Lælius (*F.* XX. 14), where P. says the offer was "twelve years before." His own arguments for dating that letter in 1359 seem to me rather to prove that it belongs to 1358; and therefore P.'s reckoning (though not always exact) would be correct.

<sup>5</sup> In *F.* XX. 14 he says, "amicis licet indignantibus"; in *Var.* 15 of 1372 (to F. Bruni, then Apostolic Secretary) his words are "indignantibus



the Pope that he was unfitted by temperament for a public life with its insistent calls upon a man's whole time and strength ; and if we are to believe his own account the courteous Pontiff admitted the force of his contention.<sup>1</sup> Either on this or on some later occasion, when he was urging him to take a bishopric, Clement said to him, " Tell me what you desire, and you shall have it." Petrarch replied,

" If you would do me a kindness, Holy Father, let not only the kindness, but the choice rest with yourself ; you know best of what I am worthy. So when, on the petition of another or in any way you hear of something suited to my powers, be so good as to remember me." <sup>2</sup>

The office of Apostolic Secretary might be described as the most confidential post in the " Civil Service " of the Curia. Its occupant was usually a man of affairs as well as a good scholar. He had to draw up the most important letters under the Pope's own instructions, and he was the head of the army of *précis-writers*,<sup>3</sup> who composed " Briefs " on the multitudinous affairs all over the world that were referred to the Holy See. He ought therefore to have some gift of organization as well as considerable tact in the management of inferiors. Petrarch no doubt possessed the latter qualification, but he was entirely destitute of the former. If he had yielded to his friends' importunity, he would soon have been utterly miserable in what he would have termed " gilded slavery," <sup>4</sup> and would have recovered his liberty by a prompt resignation. It is curious that, despite his lack of official training, he was several times <sup>5</sup> offered the same post by subsequent Popes. Perhaps it was not only his inexperience and unwillingness to " bear the collar," but a rooted dislike of

*dominis et amicis.*" The plural "*dominis*" seems to mean that Bishop Philippe was also disappointed at his refusal.

<sup>1</sup> *F. XIII. 4* (to F. da Napoli) "*longe hominum maximo (dixi) non sine illius assensu.*"

<sup>2</sup> *Var. 15* (*Frac. III. 335*).

<sup>3</sup> Of whom his old mentor, John of Florence, had been one (*Vol. I. p. 161*).

<sup>4</sup> He uses almost the very phrase—" *speciosa servitus* " and " *jugum aureum* "—in *F. XIII. 4* and *5* (*Frac. II. 226, 228*).

<sup>5</sup> Fracassetti says " five times," reckoning the years 1346, 1352, 1359, 1361 and 1362 ; but it is not certain that P.'s letter of 1352 (*F. XIII. 5* to Nelli) refers to this office, which was not then vacant ; it may have been a new post of private secretary to Clement, who was then failing in health.

"Curial" methods,<sup>1</sup> that made him persist in his refusal. On this occasion Clement conferred the post on a certain Francesco of Naples, called "the Bald," whom Petrarch styles at a later time "an excellent and painstaking person and (by his own description) my friend, yet neither lettered nor renowned." With this official he did some business six years later on his next (and last) return to Provence; and when he called on him, he could not refrain from mentally contrasting his own free and frugal life with the splendid surroundings and all-engrossing labours of his namesake. The Secretary seems to have hinted courteously that he should be glad to receive one of the poet's famous letters. He was soon gratified by one occupying nearly nine octavo pages, in which the tumult of his own occupations is disadvantageously compared with the charms of a student's solitude.<sup>2</sup> His cares are likened to the torments of Sisyphus or Ixion; he is "snowed under" by a torrent of instances from Hercules and Ulysses to Trajan and Virgil to illustrate both the tyranny of toil and the necessity of repose.

This letter is in fact an eloquent epitome of a lengthy work which Petrarch had long meditated and had then nearly completed, but which he seems to have begun now in order to justify his refusal of the Pope's offer. This is the treatise on "The Solitary Life"—dedicated (perhaps by the Bishop's request) to himself as the feudal lord of Vacluse, and commenced with extreme ardour in that retreat during the Lent of 1346.<sup>3</sup> It is an "Apologia" for his attachment to country life and his dislike of Avignon; he had projected it when he first went to Vacluse, but then thought himself unequal to the task.<sup>4</sup> Now, when the Bishop had come to his castle there for a fortnight at the beginning

<sup>1</sup> See *F.* XIII. 5 ("mihi nil penitus commune cum curia est") and *F.* XX. 14 (*Frac.* III. 51) from which I take P.'s description of the new Secretary.

<sup>2</sup> *F.* XIII. 4 (*Frac.* II. 218-226). *F.* da Napoli survived till 1359, but no details of his life are known.

<sup>3</sup> Baldelli and Tiraboschi place its composition much later—in 1351 or 1352. But it can be proved (as against Baldelli) that P.'s visit to Montrioux, which immediately occasioned his writing *De Ot. Rel.* (see p. 395, n. 1, below) took place early in 1347; and P. states in *Sen.* VI. 5 (to the Bishop, B. ed. p. 255) that he wrote these two works at Vacluse in two successive Lents. In *F.* VII I. 5 (of May, 1349) he speaks of both as already written (*Frac.* I. 420), and since he was in Italy in 1348, the year must be 1346.

<sup>4</sup> See above, Chap. XIII. (pp. 68, 69).

of the holy season in order to enjoy his society,<sup>1</sup> Petrarch took up his pen and wrote the dedicatory letter under his friend's eye. He tells him that he means to pay him, as a sort of "intellectual tithe," the first-fruits of his leisure; and he hopes that they will be regularly forthcoming, as each year comes round. In a later letter<sup>2</sup> he speaks as if he had completed the work in a very few months; but "completion" with Petrarch is always a relative term. In fact he did not write the last chapter till he was settled in Milan some eight years later<sup>3</sup>; and even then the Bishop had a long time to wait for his "tithe." The scarcity of copyists is pleaded as an excuse; but although the work was in train in 1362, as we learn from two letters from Venice,<sup>4</sup> it was not till 1366—twenty years after its inception—that the Bishop, using the mediation of Boccaccio, at length received his copy.<sup>5</sup> The work was inspired by the beauties of Vacluse; and the Bishop in his later years, when he was already a Cardinal and had long left his tiny diocese, was glad to waken the memories of the past by having it read to him, instead of the Bible, at his daily meals.<sup>6</sup> We reserve a description of its contents for a later chapter.<sup>7</sup>

On the approach of Holy Week<sup>8</sup> the poet perhaps returned to Avignon—employed, it may be, in drafting state-papers in connexion with the visit of John of Bohemia and his son to the Pope.<sup>9</sup> He was not then introduced to the future Charles IV.<sup>10</sup>; but he must have been aware of Clement's scheme, which was then maturing, to supplant the rebel "Bavarian" by the election of that Prince. Though Petrarch's stay could not have been longer than a fortnight, he once at least stole a day from his secretarial labours to visit his country home. A metrical letter to his friend Pastrengo,<sup>11</sup> describes the excursion; it is too long to

<sup>1</sup> See letter of dedication (B. ed. p. 257).

<sup>2</sup> *Sen.* V. 1 (Dec. 1365).

<sup>3</sup> See the last chapter of the treatise (*Vit. Sol.* II. § x, cap. 12).

<sup>4</sup> *Var.* 4 and 12 (to Moggi da Parma).

<sup>5</sup> Sent with *Sen.* VI. 5 (June 6, 1366).

<sup>6</sup> *Sen.* XVI. 3 (Frac.) in B. ed. p. 1051.

<sup>7</sup> Chap. XXXIII. (Book VI.). On P.'s minor works.

<sup>8</sup> In 1346 Easter fell on April 16.

<sup>9</sup> For this visit see above, Chap. XVII. p. 305 and for the sonnet probably composed at the time (Vol. I. p. 267).

<sup>10</sup> *F.* XIX. 4 (Frac. II. 525). He clearly implies that he was in Avignon.

<sup>11</sup> *Ep. Metr.* III. iii.



quote in full, and the version here given represents but faintly the felicity of the original.

" Love of my sweet retreat had drawn me forth  
From the town's whirlpool to the glassy tarn  
Of Sorga's marvellous source. . . .<sup>1</sup> Here but one day  
(Nor that complete) I spent in happy peace,  
So fast was I entangled in the noose  
Of ' Curial ' work. 'Twas of my own free will  
(I claim this credit) that the well known yoke  
Fell on my neck, and kept me in its toils.  
That day I cherish, for thy face, sweet friend,  
Everywhere met me ; thee in the pools, the meads  
And in the ' bays ' transplanted from afar  
I seemed to see ; nought else engaged my thoughts. . . .<sup>2</sup>  
While I recalled our joys, that day too brief  
Closed quickly, and I turned me from Vaucluse.

Issuing from the gorge, I leave behind  
The ' woodland Tempe ' and its shady groves,  
Its bright stream coursing on my left, when lo !  
A throng of ladies I espy in front  
Mingled with men. (The difference from afar  
Was hidden by the Gallic mode of dress.)  
We draw together ; faces I descry  
And head-gear fine, begemmed about the neck,  
And the ' hair's glory,' garb of purple fringe  
And diamond-studded fingers ; when I gaze  
More closely, and the mutual greetings pass,  
I stand amazed ; your ' flame ' it is, your ' pain,'  
The subject of our chaff.<sup>3</sup> What beauty rare !  
Within those eyes you seemed to me to dwell  
And I to greet you, take you by the hand  
And chat as ever.—' Whither are ye bound ? '  
I ask her comrades.—' To the far-famed source,'  
They answer. Yet perchance another ' source '  
Of that jaunt might be guessed. Cupid astute  
Has his own arts that lovers learn full soon !  
May-be she knew your leisure had been spent  
Here years ago <sup>4</sup> ; and since she failed to find

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<sup>1</sup> Here follows a pretty description of the flowers and nesting birds of Vaucluse, which shows that the visit was paid in spring. 1346 is practically the only year to which it can be assigned ; for it is plain from what follows that the Cardinal was relaxing his claims upon P.—a condition which does not apply to 1343. See n. 4, below.

<sup>2</sup> The passage omitted refers to their intercourse in 1339, and has already been cited in Chap. XIII. (p. 84 of this volume).

<sup>3</sup> Rossetti's translator (G. Adorni, ii. p. 407) makes the amazing suggestion that P. is here referring to " Laura." Of course the point of the whole piece is that she was an ideal " flame " of Pastrengo.

<sup>4</sup> The word is " pridem." From this Signora Magrini concludes justly (p. 130)—as against Fracassetti (*It.* ii. 438)—that the verses were written long after the visit of Pastrengo to Vaucluse in 1339. Nor is there need to conjecture, as she does, that he may have been at Avignon subsequently ; the piece is plainly a continuation of the " chaff," to which his admiration for this lady then exposed him,

Trace of yourself, she started on your track.  
 Musing in fancy on the absent face.  
 So seemed she in my thought. Whoe'er has loved  
 Would say ' This maid dotes on her mate's return !'  
 She trod alertly, keen with desire to see,  
 In brighter mien, moved by the lovely views.  
 I turn my steed beside her, tell her <sup>1</sup> whose face  
 Her looks and voice recall to me, and hope  
 Kind love may join such " doubles." She denies  
 The soft impeachment—seems as cold and hard  
 As the Thessalian maid whom Phoebus loved,<sup>2</sup>  
 Or as Diana, wrathful at the gaze  
 Of fond Actæon—had she but a bow  
 And quiver at her back. Her eyes flash darts,  
 Weapons well known to you and lovers all.  
 At length we part ; nightfall cuts short our talk."

In these lines Petrarch has not the monumental crispness of his model Horace ; but there is a humour and lightness of touch which are altogether modern. A large proportion of his letters in Latin hexameters were written in the thirteen years between his first retirement and his visit to Rome, for the Jubilee (1350), and although they vary greatly in merit, it is easy to see how his facility of expression improved with practice. Among the best are those which were inspired by the beauties of his beloved valley ; and with the one exception of his letter to the Bishop of Lombez,<sup>3</sup> they are wholly unconnected with the chief motive of his Italian poems.

At the end of April he appears to have settled down to a residence of eighteen months at Vacluse, which was seldom interrupted by visits to Avignon. It is pleasing to note that one of the first <sup>4</sup> incidents of his retirement was his intervention with his powerful friends on behalf of an oppressed peasant. His

<sup>1</sup> The original does not say that P. " told her " these things, but the context distinctly implies it. We can only suppose that a line or two has dropped out of the text. Rossetti's MS. has already supplied one line (existing also in the Laurentian codices) to the nonsense of the folio text ; and his translator agrees that the passage is still incomplete.

<sup>2</sup> The allusion is to Daphne, according to some the daughter of the river-god, Peneus, in Thessaly.

<sup>3</sup> *Ep. Metv.* I. vii.

<sup>4</sup> These letters are dated by de Sade (II. 316-318) in 1347, and Fracassetti follows him, although the latter's decision is inconsistent with his own note on *Var.* 49—a letter unknown to de Sade. *Var.* 49 is a letter addressed to Barbato on January 18, 1347, recommending Lælius to him (see below). It shows that Lælius was then on the eve of starting for Naples ; and it is scarcely likely that he had returned to Avignon before April 26, 1347. Assuming that " April 26 " is the true date of the first letter, we may confidently assign both to 1346.

bailiff came to him with the news that a labouring acquaintance, who under promise of marriage had been too intimate with a girl in the neighbouring village of Thor, had been imprisoned by his feudal lord and was threatened with capital punishment for rape, although he was willing, with the girl's full consent, to perform his promise. Petrarch at once dispatched his bailiff to Avignon with a letter to Lælius,<sup>1</sup> urging that Cardinal Colonna should intercede for the prisoner.

"When these details reached my ears—first through indignant popular talk, afterwards by the tears and entreaties of my humble friends—you at once occurred to me as a source of help in such a trouble. We too, brother, have loved, and we ought to lend assistance to the lovers. I am sure that our common lord, though such passions scarcely touch his lofty soul, is not of so iron and inhuman a temper as to feel no compassion for the frailties of mankind. We ought not to fancy that countryfolk are less amorous than ourselves; 'the boy with the unerring bow' has equal power over all ranks. . . . The prisoner's name and the details of his case will be related by my bailiff here, whom I send for the purpose; he will be a pleader as simple as the lover, whose forgiveness we seek.

*"April 26."*

From another letter, dated three days later,<sup>2</sup> it appears that, according to rumour, the Seigneur of Thor<sup>3</sup> was actuated not by zeal for public morality, but by feelings of private revenge. In plain language it was asserted that he had himself made shameful overtures to this village beauty, who "had preferred the blandishments of her poor sweetheart" to the temptation of her Seigneur's gold. Meanwhile the former was in hourly danger of his life from his rival's tyranny; and Petrarch again sent his bailiff to Lælius to hasten the Cardinal's intercession.

". . . I marvel at the effect which your kindly reception has produced upon this waterside creature,<sup>4</sup> who takes his food from the rocks. He came back to me with no thought of himself,

<sup>1</sup> *F. III. 21.*

<sup>2</sup> *F. III. 22, of April 29.*

<sup>3</sup> His name, according to de Sade, was Géraud, of the de Sabran family, to which Prof. Flamini conjectures that "Laura" belonged (*Vol. I. p. 250*).

<sup>4</sup> The letter has a long exordium on the attractive force of famous men and on the power of man over nature, illustrated by the story of Arion and the dolphin; it is in this connexion that P. calls his fisherman attendant "aquaticum animal."



but wholly engrossed in you. When I put many questions about my patron and my friends, his replies were all about Lælius—not a word of anything but his handsome face, his character, his house and dress; with rustic volubility he was extolled to me (despite my impatient interruptions) as if he were a stranger. When I burst in with the Terentian objection, ‘*Do you praise him to me?*’<sup>1</sup> he began the whole story over again. I saw then—I protest without vexation or envy—that you had captured my bailiff; I was amazed that you had gained more influence over him in an hour than I in ten years,<sup>2</sup> so magical a power has your friendly talk had upon him. Now, full of his new affection, he goes back to you again, hoping to get our patron’s help by your means. . . . You may place him high on the list of your humble friends, for he reckons you among the first of his lords; he seems more anxious to gain your favour even than the life of his old comrade!<sup>3</sup> And so, to steal into your good graces straight away, he proves his devotion to you by what I may call an ‘allegorical gift’; he brings you a jar of ‘virgin’ oil—sweetest of liquors—which has flowed from the berries of the trees on our hills without artificial pressure. I should have said that Minerva, the discoverer of the olive, had made them her home in preference to Athens, if I had not already placed her in my *Africa* at Lerici, or Porto Venere.”<sup>4</sup>

This seems the most fitting place to describe the humble family, who shared Petrarch’s house and to whom he owed so much of the comfort of his rural seclusion. In his Will the poet styles his bailiff “Raymond of Clermont, commonly called Monet,”<sup>5</sup> and says that he served him with the greatest fidelity. The man made his living by catching fish in the Sorgues, by cultivating his master’s small plot of land and perhaps by the

<sup>1</sup> Terence, *Eunuchus* V. Sc. ix. 22, 23.

<sup>2</sup> This is the expression which leads de Sade to date the letters in 1347, but here (as often) P. may be only using a round number.

<sup>3</sup> We are not told the *dénouement* of this rustic drama. P. speaks as if the Seigneur had absolute power of life and death over this swain, whose only chance was the Cardinal’s intercession. Theoretically this may have been the case, if the man were a serf; but free labourers were much more common in Southern than in Northern France. Even in the north the worst abuses of serfdom had been abolished thirty years before by an ordinance of Louis X. (1315); and the growth of absolutism at Paris had had the effect of reducing considerably the tyranny of the local nobility. But Thor belonged to the Comtât Venaissin, which for seventy years had been subject to the Popes; and therefore a small seigneur could hardly disregard the request of a powerful Cardinal, especially when public opinion was against him.

<sup>4</sup> *Africa*, Lib. VI. 860, 861.

<sup>5</sup> Probably Clermont-Lodève, on the Cargues, north-west of Montpellier (*Testamentum Petrarcae*, B. ed. p. 1375).

occupation of other land adjacent, on which he grew olives. He died suddenly in January, 1353; and his death recalled Petrarch in haste to Vacluse, though he was then engaged in important business at Avignon with the Cardinals Talleyrand and Gui de Boulogne. In a letter to the two Cardinals excusing his absence,<sup>1</sup> the poet shows real concern at the loss of so faithful a friend and speaks of him in these high terms:

“ My bailiff was a man of the country, yet endued with greater sagacity and refinement than belong to cities. I think the earth never produced a creature so trustworthy. In short this one man, by his splendid loyalty, made up for and helped to restrain the rascality and perfidy of my other servants, of which I daily complain by word of mouth and have sometimes complained in writing. And so I gave into his charge myself and my affairs and all the books which I have in France. There is a great variety of volumes—very small ones mixed with the big; yet though I was long away, and sometimes returned after three years’<sup>2</sup> absence, I never found anything missing or even moved from its place. Though unlettered himself, he was a great lover of letters; and he took more particular care of the books which he knew I prized. Long practice had enabled him to recognize the works of the ancients by their names, and even to distinguish them from my own little treatises. He used to be overjoyed when I placed some book in his hands and would clasp it to his bosom with a sigh; sometimes he would address the author in a low tone, and (strange to say) by the mere touch and sight of the books he fancied that he became happier and more learned.”

It is all to Petrarch’s credit that this generous appreciation of his old servant was not drawn from him merely by a sense of his own immediate loss. Years after Monet’s death he cherished his memory and said of him to a friend of later days, “ To call him ‘ faithful ’ seemed disparaging, for he was faith personified.”<sup>3</sup> The same letter gives anecdotes of his sagacity. On his master’s departure or return from a journey, he used to say, “ You will spend (or have spent) so much ”; and his calculations were so exact that Petrarch vows this servitor, who rarely left his humble home, might have been at his elbow in every hostelry where he

<sup>1</sup> *F.* XVI. I. (*Frac.* II. 363).

<sup>2</sup> The Colbertin MS. at Paris has “ triennium ” for Fracassetti’s “ terminum.”

<sup>3</sup> *Sen.* IX. 2 (to F. Bruni)—a letter of 1368 (*B. ed.* p. 944).

lodged. Yet Monet would shake his head over this constant travelling, and remark, "With such careering about you will never be rich," reminding him of the proverb that "a rolling stone gathers no moss."<sup>1</sup> In recognition of such rare fidelity the poet bequeathed to Raymond's two sons, Jean and Pierre, the reversion of his small property at Vaucluse in case his first intention of leaving it to the local hospital should fail to take effect. This paragon of stewards possessed a helpmeet scarcely inferior to himself in unselfish devotion; her hardy life and humble virtues are thus described in one of the best known passages of Petrarch's correspondence<sup>2</sup>:

"Nowhere can I espy a woman's face, except the countenance of my bailiff's wife; and if you were to see that, you would think you beheld a Libyan or Ethiopian desert—so withered is it and utterly parched by the sun's heat that there seems to be no vigour or sap remaining. If Helen had had the like, Troy would be still standing; had it belonged to Lucretia or Virginia, Tarquin would not have been driven from his realm, nor Appius closed his career in prison. Yet—lest this picture of her appearance should detract from the praise due to her character—her soul is as white as her face is dark; she is a standing example of the truth that female ugliness can in no wise affect the spirit beneath (a point I might enlarge upon, but that Seneca has done full justice to it in his epistle about Claranus).<sup>3</sup> It is a singular trait in this woman that though outward beauty is more a female than a male endowment, she is so utterly unconscious of its absence that you would think her uncomeliness actually becoming. She is the most faithful, unassuming, industrious creature alive. Under the most burning of suns, when the grasshoppers can scarce bear the heat, she passes long days in the fields, and her tanned skin scorns the fires of Cancer or Leo.<sup>4</sup> Returning home, the old dame applies her tireless and indomitable little person to household cares with as much zest as a young girl fresh from her chamber. She does this without a murmur or complaint or the least sign of agitation, but rather with a solicitude for the comfort of her husband and sons, of my household and my arriving guests, as incredible as is her absolute contempt for her own. The couch of this woman of granite is the bare ground strewn

<sup>1</sup> P.'s version of this is "Non facit muscum sæpe volutus lapis." Erasmus, in the *Adagia* (ed. 1632, p. 75), gives two other Latin versions and also the original Greek.

<sup>2</sup> *F.* XIII. 8, to Nelli (Frac. II. 249).

<sup>3</sup> *Moral Epistles*, 66, § 4.

<sup>4</sup> That is, of June or July, of which these are the Zodiacal signs.



with brushwood, her food an earthy <sup>1</sup> sort of bread, her drink a wine more like vinegar and freely mixed with water. If you offer her any delicacy, her taste from long desuetude regards more palatable things as hard."

It is some tribute to this self-absorbed man of letters that he had so keen an eye for the virtues of his simple attendants. His own tastes in food, as we learn from the same letter, were extremely frugal. He tells his correspondent that he prefers the "peasants' bread," and that when any white bread reached him from the town, he left it to be consumed by the servants who brought it. His delicacies were grapes, figs, nuts and almonds; and he not only much enjoyed the small fish taken from the Sorgues, but himself assisted in their capture. The only point of difference between him and his "most indulgent friend" and bailiff was that Monet disapproved of the hardness of his master's fare and warned him that he could not endure it long. One would imagine that the chief drawback of such a life for a cultivated man with a gift for friendship would be the loss of all intercourse with his equals in position and education; for with the feudal gentry he could have nothing in common. His friends at Avignon had their own avocations, and the rare visits they paid him would be mainly in summer. There is no doubt that Petrarch felt this deprivation during his long "solitudes" at Vaucluse and elsewhere. Hence arose in part his frequent longings for change of scene, his wavering between town and country; hence also his plans for living in retirement with some chosen friend of similar tastes.

But there is reason to believe that he was not as "solitary" during this second seclusion in the "Closed Valley" as he was in much of the first and the third. Either just before or soon after his return to Provence he was joined by a young relative from Florence, who spent "nearly two whole years" <sup>2</sup> with him and shared his life. He bore the same Christian name as our poet, familiarly lengthened into "Franceschino"; but it is curious that the latter never mentions his surname. From tradition

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Hollway-Calthrop (p. 161) translates "as hard as iron"; but the word in Fracassetti's text is certainly "terreus," not "ferreus."

<sup>2</sup> "Biennio vix integro," *F.* VII. 12, April, 1348 (*Frac.* I. 382). Probably this period ended with the summer of 1347, for the following year Albizzi did not know that his cousin was in Italy (*F.* VII. 11). He may therefore have joined him in Verona for the journey to Provence.

alone we learn that he belonged to the powerful family of degli Albizzi—so prominent during the next century in Florentine politics<sup>1</sup>; and his relationship to Petrarch's family of dell' Ancisa seems to have been on his mother's side. Whatever was the motive that brought him to Avignon,<sup>2</sup> he settled for a time with his older cousin, and the close association gave rise to a warm affection on both sides. Perhaps the first bond of union between them would be a common love of Italian poetry, for which the younger man had a remarkable gift. A ballata and a canzone of his have survived, and their merits account for the honourable place which Petrarch has given him among the national poets in the *Triumph of Love*.<sup>3</sup> He seems to have been a youth of rare parts and of a very sweet disposition<sup>4</sup>; and he may therefore have had the tact to respect his cousin's privacy when he was engaged in the throes of composition. But at meals and in hours of recreation his company would be invaluable. His presence would check the disposition to brood and sink into dreams, which was Petrarch's literary weakness, and which—though it may have enriched the *Canzoniere*—was one of the reasons why he left so many of his serious works unfinished. He would be interested in his young friend's attempts to write poetry, and would give him many useful lessons in technique. Of his own lyrics only three sonnets and one canzone<sup>5</sup> can be dated with any certainty during this period of seclusion. But it was extremely fruitful in Latin poetry; and two of his best verse-letters (to Cardinal Colonna)<sup>6</sup> are concerned with a second vain endeavour to soften the weird wildness of the Fountain basin by the introduction of a garden of flowers.

From his first retirement into the country Petrarch became an indefatigable gardener; in his later years in Italy he even

<sup>1</sup> They held almost autocratic power from 1382 to 1433—a time of great prosperity—until they were ousted by their rivals the Medici. De Sade says (II. 433) that Franceschino's father, Taddeo Albizzi, was a famous Florentine commander. If so, the family may have been originally "noble"; and it has but recently become extinct (H. Wills, *Florentine Heraldry*, 1900, p. 124).

<sup>2</sup> Fracassetti (It. ii. 222, following de Sade) says that he was on his way to Paris and its university; but P.'s letters say nothing of this.

<sup>3</sup> *Tr. d'Am.* iii. l. 37.

<sup>4</sup> See *F.* VII. 11 (*Frac.* I. 382, 383).

<sup>5</sup> Ss. 177, 185, 201 and *Canz.* XX. ("Ben mi credea"). The date of the last is proved by a marginal note in Vat. No. 3196 (autograph draft).

<sup>6</sup> *Ep. Metr.* III. i. and iv.

kept a sort of gardening journal (of course in Latin) on the fly-leaves of one of his manuscripts.<sup>1</sup> We have seen that in his first seclusion he attempted to establish an upper garden near the Fount; and from a letter during his last stay we learn that he was no mere superintendent, but had planted both his gardens with his own hands.<sup>2</sup> In the earlier poem of July, 1346, he tells his patron that that first attempt was soon destroyed by his inveterate foes, the "Nymphs" of the Sorgues. He explains in mock-Virgilian style that "the first seeds of the war" arose from his essaying to instal the Muses in a new Helicon; the local "Naiads" were furious that this stranger should prefer the company of nine old ladies (and exiles to boot) to a myriad of pretty girls, and they soon destroyed the battlements which he had raised against their attack. He was planning a renewal of the contest, when he was called beyond seas and took "the Nine" with him to Latium and the august Capitol of Rome. When he returned six years later,<sup>3</sup> he could find no trace of his first attempt; his rock-barrier had disappeared, and fish swam placidly over the site of his garden.

" Grief

Drives me to arms, with strength renewed by ire;  
Hard rustics quickly muster, and a squad  
Of shepherds cheaply hired; fishers half-nude  
Leave their moist prey to 'list beneath my flag."

This "chosen band of youths" roll huge rocks to the verge of the pool, and expel the Nymphs from the land they have usurped, constructing a sort of winter causeway to the reclaimed spot. The work was carried through in mid July<sup>4</sup>; kind Phœbus helped the cause and his sister lent her light—in plain terms the weather was fair, and there was a full moon. The cowed enemy were content with threats and a hollow murmur of protest. But the poet, though triumphant, had his misgivings that the resistance was merely deferred to the storms and snows of

<sup>1</sup> The Vatican MS. "lat. 2193," containing five works of Apuleius, two orations of Cicero, Frontinus, Vegetius, and Palladius, *De Agriculturâ*, which last doubtless dictated his choice of the volume.

<sup>2</sup> *F.* XI. 12 (*Frac.* II. 139). "Hortulos meos his manibus consitos."

<sup>3</sup> The first attempt was in 1339; the "altera ætas" was the summer (perhaps actually the early autumn) of 1340. The six years are those from 1340 to 1346; but of course we are not to assume that he never visited Vaucluse during this interval. Probably he was never there a sufficiently long time in one stay to resume the strife.

<sup>4</sup> See ll. 58, 59, "manifesta Canis, manifesta Leonis Sensimus auxilia."



January; he thought uneasily of the burst banks of the Po,<sup>1</sup> and the "Araxes that disdains a bridge."<sup>2</sup> But for the moment the Muses' fortress seemed secure; he invites his patron to survey the result of his labours. If the Cardinal dreads the hardships of rural life, the distance is so short that he can bring his own wines and silver and the dainties of the court; Vacluse can offer him grapes and figs, with the dulcet strains of the nightingale and cool water fresh from the Fount.

In a second poem of the following July,<sup>3</sup> the poet has to admit almost total defeat, after a ten years' struggle—equal, he says, in length to the siege of Troy or the subjugation of Gaul. The "spate" of the previous winter had overwhelmed his proud works, which he fondly compares to Xerxes' path over the Hellespont, to Cæsar's blocking of the harbour of Brundisium, or to Caligula's bridge of boats at Baiae. His rocky causeway has vanished, either borne away by the stream or carried off for other purposes by its constructors. His combat with the Nymphs has been good sport, but they can always destroy in winter his erections of the summer; it is useless to contend against the forces of Nature. Like a sensible pilot, he will now be content rather to follow than to oppose the winds, which perhaps may bear him to a different shore.<sup>4</sup> A small corner of his mountain garden remains<sup>5</sup>—large enough for the Muses and himself (for the vulgar care nothing for either and consider his life a madness); this spot he is fortifying so that it cannot be invaded, unless the adjacent cliff be torn up by the roots. He is consoling himself by learning the fisherman's art—either by spearing them with a small trident (now his only weapon), or by constructing traps of osiers, which they can enter but cannot leave. He begs the Cardinal to accept, along with his poem, some of the latest fruits of his skill.

In the summer of 1346 Petrarch was occupied with a more ambitious effort in Latin poetry than the composition of these

<sup>1</sup> Virg. *Georg.* i. 481.

<sup>2</sup> *Æn.* viii. 728 ("pontem indignatus Araxes"). Servius states in his note that a bridge over this river, made by Alexander the Great, had been swept away, but that Augustus bridged it successfully.

<sup>3</sup> *Ep. Metr.* III. iv. 1 ("Julius alter adest"). Perhaps the Cardinal's birthday was in early July.

<sup>4</sup> Possibly an allusion to an intention forming in his mind to return to Italy.

<sup>5</sup> This is the "angulus" mentioned above (see Excursus V.).

mock-heroic verses. In a letter to Gherardo of December, 1349,<sup>1</sup> he styles this "a pastoral poem divided into twelve Eclogues which I had long had in mind," and adds, "You would hardly credit in how few days I completed it, so strong was the stimulus which the scenery (of Vacluse) supplied to my powers." We have here some confusion of thought or memory; for the subjects of some of his Eclogues were suggested by events—such as the revolution of Rienzi and the death of "Laura"—which had not taken place in 1346, and others could not have been written (as we have them) at the date of the letter. Either he must have composed Eclogues on other subjects which he afterwards destroyed, or he must have forgotten that the "few days" work was only spent on five<sup>2</sup> of the series. My own opinion is that the difficulty is simply due to a careless substitution in 1359<sup>3</sup> of "twelve" (which was the final number) for "five," without his observing that the alteration falsified the remainder of the sentence. This letter, it is true, is mainly concerned with the first Eclogue; but the assertion is made of the whole series.

The most interesting part of the passage is the allusion to the Eclogues as a project which he "had long had in mind." We naturally wonder how long, and we are disposed to ask what it was that led him along a path really far removed from the ancient models which he held in supreme reverence. It is often supposed that in the Eclogues his only model was Virgil's *Bucolic*, as in the *Africa* it is the *Æneid* and in the metrical letters the Epistles of Horace. But these so-called "pastorals" of Petrarch bear

<sup>1</sup> *F. X.* 4 (to Gherardo) of December 2, from Padua. Fracassetti dates this letter in 1348 (*It.* ii. 496–498), but he had not then discovered the sixth letter in his Appendix (the original of *F.* VIII. 2–5, see Note to Chap. XXII., below), which proves that P. first went to Padua in March, 1349, and he was there again in the following December. Fracassetti was misled by P.'s statement in *F. X.* 4 that he wrote the Eclogues "three summers back" ("tertia retro æstas," *Frac.* II. 85). I believe that this is simply a mistake in P.'s calculation; it was three and a half years before, which would be "four summers back." This can be proved from *Var.* 49 (of January 18, 1347) in which he says he wrote them "nuper," and from *Var.* 42 (to Cola in the summer of 1347), where he says he wrote them in the previous year ("æstate alterâ," *Frac.* III. 410).

<sup>2</sup> These were Eclogues I.–IV. and the greater part of XII. (see below, p. 393). Such is the opinion of E. Carrara ("*I commenti antichi e la cronologia delle Egloghe Petrarquesche*") in *Giorn. Storico della Lett. Ital.* t. XXVIII. (1896), pp. 123–153.

<sup>3</sup> The year in which he revised the letters for publication,

only a superficial resemblance to the Bucolic of Virgil. The pastoral setting in the former is wholly adventitious and unreal ; their primary motive is scarcely even literary (as with Virgil), but rather so cryptic in its meaning that the author confesses it cannot be discovered without his help.<sup>1</sup> It is true that the scenery of Virgil's Eclogues is confused and conventional, and that most of them have a background of hidden reference, which the literary Augustan age would not find hard to unravel. So far we feel that they are artificial—a grievous decline from the idyllic world of nature, which his model Theocritus had taken pains to represent. But the allegory of Virgil is not too recondite. Like Spenser in the *Shepherd's Calendar*, he employs it as a concession to the cultivated courtier-taste of his age, without suffering the charm of pastoral rusticity to evaporate in the process. In short, the *raison d'être* of his Eclogues does not consist wholly in their background of allusion ; rather the allusions are devised to give a sharper flavour to the poetry. How comes it that Petrarch, with his natural humanist leaning towards a rational interpretation of the ancient writers, should have failed to grasp this fundamental distinction ? We can only ascribe it to the mediæval tradition of Virgilian interpretation, which he found in the early commentators<sup>2</sup>—perhaps also in the famous work of Fulgentius,<sup>3</sup> who first “moralized” the *Æneid*. We feel that our guide to the ancient world has here missed his way ; he is taking a step backward in deference to some contemporary criterion of poetic values, which has since become obsolete.

What that criterion was his letter to Gherardo just quoted plainly shows. To him allegory is no mere literary contrivance, at times poetically effective ; it is “the very warp and woof of all poetry.”<sup>4</sup> He seems to hold that the more allegory a poem has, the better its poetry, or—to put the matter personally—

<sup>1</sup> See *F. X.* 4 (Frac. II. 86) and *Var.* 42 (Frac. III. 410, 411).

<sup>2</sup> This excessive allegorizing was begun by Ælius Donatus (about A.D. 350), continued with rather more restraint by Servius, and pursued with extreme zest by Fulgentius and later interpreters.

<sup>3</sup> *De continentia Virgiliana* (probably of the 6th century). It is a commentary on the *Æneid* ; but in the preface he gives his ideas about the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* (see Comparetti, *Virg. nel Medio. Evo.* I. 144, 145). It is not expressly cited by P. but de Nolhac (*P. et l'Hum.* I. 131) thinks that he must have read it.

<sup>4</sup> I borrow Mr. Rolfe's translation (p. 262) ; the exact words are “ex hujusce sermonis (*i.e.* allegoriæ) genere, poetica omnis intexta est” (Frac. II. 83).



the more completely a poet hides his real meaning, the higher his merit. Such a criterion might be welcomed by some modern poets; but it is utterly at variance with Petrarch's general practice, especially in his best Italian poems. In these he is never obscure, except when he becomes mystical; and he seldom troubles himself about any secondary or occult meaning. But in each of his Eclogues he poses a sort of riddle, which no one could be expected to guess, unless furnished with a clue. The Bucolic of the fourteenth century, to which each of the literary "triumvirate"—Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio—contributed, is entirely of this type. Though all three writers take Virgil for their model, each of the two last is indebted to his immediate predecessor. I may, perhaps, be permitted the conjecture that when Petrarch was at Bologna, in March, 1345, recovering from the accident to his arm, some friend showed him for the first time the Eclogues of Dante and Giovanni del Virgilio,<sup>1</sup> and that these first gave him the idea of elaborating the allegorical machinery of the Latin pastoral.

Dante's first Eclogue<sup>2</sup> does less violence than the Petrarchan to the pastoral idea. Although entirely allegorical, it is simply a graceful *jeu d'esprit*, in which he declines an invitation to receive the poetic crown at Bologna. Its meaning, however—though patent to his correspondent—would be unintelligible to an outsider. The names of his shepherds are taken from Virgil; and he would find many allegorical interpretations of the latter's eclogues in the commentary of Servius, with which he was probably familiar.<sup>3</sup> But it is not the fact, as has been stated,<sup>4</sup> that his was the first Eclogue since the days of Virgil. Calpurnius, who is said to have been a Sicilian, wrote seven in the reign of Nero; and several poems of the pastoral type were produced

<sup>1</sup> I have referred to these eclogues above (Chap. XII. p. 25). Virgilio addressed another to Mussato, who also wrote one of the same type (Koerting, III. pp. 324, 365).

<sup>2</sup> Ecl. II. is now suspected not to be his, though possibly inspired by him.

<sup>3</sup> See Dr. Moore's *Studies in Dante* (First Series), p. 189. Servius, though sometimes rejecting allegories suggested by others, runs riot in his interpretations of Virgil's Ecl. I. (Comparetti, I. p. 79).

<sup>4</sup> By Mr. F. J. Snell in *The Fourteenth Century* (p. 206) and *Handbook to Dante* (p. 64). He relies apparently on del Virgilio's mistaken statement in his eclogue to Mussato (ll. 8, 9). See *Dante and Giovanni del Virgilio* (1902) by Wicksteed and Gardner, p. 176. It has been shown by F. Macri-Leone in his *La Bucolica Latina nella Lett. Ital. del secolo XIV.* (Turin, 1889, pp. 10-41) that Bucolic has had a long history.

during the decadence and in the Middle Ages.<sup>1</sup> But Dante can scarcely have seen any of these, nor indeed can Petrarch, except the *Bucolicon* of Calpurnius, which he may have read at Verona in 1345.<sup>2</sup> Boccaccio, in a letter giving the key to his own Eclogues,<sup>3</sup> begins with a compendious history of the earlier Bucolic. He names only Theocritus, Virgil, and Petrarch; and his description of the others as "ignoble" is especially surprising, as he was acquainted with Dante's effort.<sup>4</sup> He draws a distinction between Theocritus (who employs no allegory), Virgil (who has some, but does not always express it in the names of his shepherds) and "my famous teacher, Francesco Petrarca, who gave uncommon sublimity to this form of writing, and supplied names of speakers suited to the subjects of his Eclogues." He adds that he has himself not always followed him in the last particular.

This mature<sup>5</sup> opinion of Boccaccio deserves our careful attention. If Petrarch gave "uncommon sublimity" to the classical Eclogue, it can only be because the obscurity of allegory was held by his affectionate pupil to be an essential element in "the sublime." Certainly that appears to be the deliberate (if deplorable) judgment of the fourteenth century. Petrarch's Eclogues were especially admired and imitated for their worst fault—their enigmatic mystery. Prof. W. P. Ker has recently displayed some impatience at the strictures upon the Middle Age for its proneness to allegory,<sup>6</sup> and has justly remarked that there is plenty of allegory in the classics<sup>7</sup> and that the vogue of it continued far beyond the time of the Renaissance. All this is perfectly true; and he might have gone on to show that Eastern literatures are steeped in allegory, and that it has been considered

<sup>1</sup> Besides those mentioned in the text, eclogues were written by Nemesianus (3rd century) and Theodulus (5th century); and there was an outburst of Bucolic (so called) among the sages of Charlemagne's court. A Benedictine, Metellus (1160), celebrates the "gesta" of St. Quirinius in what he calls a "pastoral" (Macri-Leone, *op. cit.*).

<sup>2</sup> See F. XXII, 11, where P. asks Pastrengo for a long promised copy.

<sup>3</sup> To Frate Martino da Signa in F. Corazzini, *Lettere del Boccaccio* (pp. 267, *seqq.*).

<sup>4</sup> In his *Vita di Dante* he calls D.'s Eclogues "assai belle."

<sup>5</sup> The above letter of Boccaccio is conjecturally placed about 1372—before P.'s death (A. Hortis, *Sulle Opere Latine del. B.*, Trieste, 1879, pp. 297–299).

<sup>6</sup> *The Dark Ages*, pp. 27–32.

<sup>7</sup> The only instance in Greek Literature actually quoted is Plato, who was an allegorizing philosopher. The tendency of that literature as a whole is in the opposite direction.

a suitable medium for conveying moral and spiritual truths from Hebrew prophecy to the *Faery Queen* and the *Pilgrim's Progress*. Petrarch himself tried to overcome the anticipated shrinking of his Carthusian brother from the Pagan trappings of his Eclogues by maintaining that theology and poetry are twin sisters, and that the greatest truths of the Old and New Testament are presented in poetic garb.<sup>1</sup> But these *ex parte* arguments do not alter the fact that it was "a step backward" for a humanist interpreter of the classics to use the Virgilian Bucolic as a medium for expressing his own views on the politics and literature of his day. Petrarch has taken the Eclogue, not fresh from the hands of his model Virgil, but rather at the developed stage which it had reached after centuries of Christian adaptation. We have seen that in his laureate address on the Capitol he defends his view of the allegorical office of poetry by a single citation from Lactantius<sup>2</sup>; and this "Christian Cicero" (as he is called) belonged to an age when sacred literature had already begun to annex the literary "forms" of the old Paganism and convert them to the service of the Church. "Just as the heathen temples were not destroyed, but blessed and consecrated to Christ,"<sup>3</sup> so the old poetry had to be clothed in a new garb, which completely altered its character. In the case of the Eclogue the transformation was peculiarly easy because of the metaphor common in Scripture and in the Church of the "Shepherd" and his "flock." Even as early as the fourth century we have a Christian *Carmen Bucolicum*,<sup>4</sup> which is really a poem in honour of the sign of the Cross; and in the ninth we have the pastoral dialogue of Paschasius Radbert, in which two shepherdesses, Phyllis and Galatea (standing for the "old" and the "new" abbeys of Corbie) bewail the death of St. Adelhard.<sup>5</sup> This is not unlike Petrarch's lament for the death of King Robert (Ecl. II.); but it seems impossible that our poet had seen it.

Thus while it may be true that the mediæval eclogue had no direct influence upon that of the fourteenth century, yet the

<sup>1</sup> *F. X.* 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Instit.* I. 36. See above, Chap. XIV. p. 143.

<sup>3</sup> Macri-Leone (*op. cit.*), p. 20.

<sup>4</sup> This is the *De virtute signi crucis* of Severus Sanctus Endelechius, a relative of Ausonius and a rhetorician converted from Paganism.

<sup>5</sup> He calls his work *Ecloga duorum sanctimonialium*, and is said to be imitating Virgil's Eclogue V.



latter was in no sense a return to the classic spirit of the Virgilian Bucolic. In Virgil allegory is introduced into the Eclogue so sparingly as not to destroy its pastoral reality ; and his cryptic allusions are always to facts rather than to ideas. The poet's personality may sometimes lurk behind that of one of his shepherds, but none of the others can be safely identified with any Augustan personage.<sup>1</sup> But from the fourth century onwards, under the influence of a symbolism discernible in Pagan as well as Christian letters, the Eclogue had ceased altogether to be really bucolic, and had simply become the vehicle for expressing literary or religious ideas. Even if Dante knew nothing of its past development, he inevitably used it as his predecessors had done ; and Petrarch, instead of restoring it to its classic purity, simply refurbished it as an instrument of allegory. He made it still more unreal by discarding the time-honoured Virgilian names for his shepherds (which Dante had preserved) and substituting others of his own devising, which have some connexion—frequently rather occult—with its allegorical significance. The framework of his symbolical machinery is often clumsy ; you feel that the poet is much more concerned with the allegory than with the appropriateness of its pastoral setting. In spite of these glaring defects, his Eclogues contain isolated passages which are beautifully expressed ; and the three <sup>2</sup> that refer more or less remotely to “ Laura ” are superior to the rest. Hortis considers that some of Boccaccio's Eclogues, though avowedly imitated from those of his “ master,” excel them in fancy, in pathos and in conformity to nature,<sup>3</sup> The Bucolic of the fourteenth century—unlike that of Theocritus and Virgil—is entirely in dialogue form ; and this perhaps is one reason of its contemporary popularity. It supplied a want unconsciously felt ; for the age had no serious drama which was not strictly religious.<sup>4</sup> It is but a short step from the pastoral dialogue to

<sup>1</sup> In Ecls. V. and IX. Menalcas is supposed to be Virgil ; and Servius presumes to identify Mopsus in the former with Æmilius Macer, a poet of Verona.

<sup>2</sup> Ecls. III., X., and XI.

<sup>3</sup> *Sulle Opere Latine del B.*, pp. 67, 68. He also bestows high praise on B.'s Italian pastoral *Ameto*—an allegorical romance in mingled prose and verse. Perhaps few critics to-day would be disposed to echo this favourable verdict.

<sup>4</sup> In *Invect in Med.* II. (B. ed. p. 1215) P. separates the drama from poetry proper and calls it “ an immoral art.”

the pastoral play, which had a brief but considerable vogue in the later Renaissance.<sup>1</sup>

The public might be content to read and admire these poems without fully understanding them. But for an intelligent comprehension it was necessary to provide a key ; and this Petrarch has himself furnished for three <sup>2</sup> of his Eclogues, while the rest were interpreted in his old age (but apparently without his authority) by his later acquaintances, Benvenuto Rambaldi da Imola and Donato Albanzani.<sup>3</sup> Of the five which he composed in 1346, the motive of one (Ecl. I.—a dialogue between himself and his brother on the monastic life) is religious ; of two (Ecls. III. and IV. on his laurel-crowning and on the poetic gift) literary ; of two (Ecls. II. and XII.) political. The last is on the Anglo-French war ; and it probably owes its position to a postscript (the last nine lines) which he added in 1356 after the battle of Poitiers. The rest of the Eclogue must have been written before the battle of Crécy (August 26, 1346), and it certainly shows no prepossession in favour of France. But the misfortunes of the French—and perhaps King John's flattering invitation to Paris in 1353—changed the direction of his sympathies and impelled him to write the conclusion in a wholly different tone.<sup>4</sup>

As regards his Eclogues Petrarch felt none of the shrinking from publicity which he exhibited about his unfinished *Africa*. When Lælius was leaving Avignon for Naples in January, 1347, on business of his own, Petrarch wrote a letter,<sup>5</sup> warmly recommending him to Barbato and Barili and urging them to forward his affairs in every possible way. The following postscript (longer than the original letter) shows that in Lælius' opinion a poetic offering might make them more complaisant.

“ At this point Lælius compelled me to a task which I had

<sup>1</sup> Notably in Guarini's *Pastor Fido* (1590) and Tasso's *Aminta* (1581).

<sup>2</sup> Of Ecl. I. in *F. X.* 4, of Ecl. II. in *Var.* 49, of Ecl. V. in *Var.* 42.

<sup>3</sup> The commentary which Hortis (in his *Scritti inediti del. P.* 1874, following an Este MS.) attributed to P. himself, is now considered by E. Carrara (*op. cit.* 1896) and A. d'Avena (*Il Bucolicum Carmen e i suoi commenti in Padova in onore di F. P.* t. I. 1906) to be a variant (perhaps an archetype) of Donato's version. Its interpretation of Eclogues I., II. and V. differs in many respects from P.'s own explanation in *F. X.* 4, *Var.* 49 and *Var.* 42, and it contains gross errors which P. could not have committed.

<sup>4</sup> See Chap. XXXII. (on P.'s embassy to Paris in 1360).

<sup>5</sup> *Var.* 49.

refused, from fatigue arising from 'Curial' business and severe press of occupation. It was that I should employ my weary hand in transcribing at least one specimen of the Bucolic poem which I lately composed in my solitude at Vaucluse—the part dedicated to the eternal memory of our most sainted king.<sup>1</sup> In the words of Lælius, my desire is to send this acknowledgment—small indeed, but (as he imagines) acceptable—to you two and to Master Niccolo d'Alife, by whose advice and kind help he trusts that his affairs will have a favourable issue. In this matter I repeat my entreaties that his hopes, if they should be feasible may not fail of accomplishment. In order that the sense of this Eclogue may be plainer you should learn that, according to the 'argument' I mention, by the shepherd full of eyes is meant our most watchful lord king, who had been the far-sighted shepherd of his people; by 'Idæus' I mean our 'Jupiter,'<sup>2</sup> (for Jove was brought up in Ida of Crete); by 'Pythias' I mean our Barbato from his signal renown for friendship; and since I may not assume this for myself, I have chosen to be not Damon, but 'Silvius'—both from my ingrained love of the woods, and because this form of poetry occurred to me (as I said) in my woodland solitude. The rest is clear.<sup>3</sup> Written in 'the Hell of the living, January 18.' "

This letter, which was first published by Fracassetti from a MS. at Florence,<sup>4</sup> was not among those revised by Petrarch for publication; otherwise we should scarcely have been allowed to know that he designated Avignon to his friends as "the Hell of the living." He may have come to the city to speed Lælius on his journey, and shortly before, according to custom, he would spend Christmas there; but the autumn was probably passed at Vaucluse. After Christmas he took Socrates with him to his retreat for a brief holiday, and found a message from Bishop Philippe urging him to pay him a visit at Cavaillon. He replied<sup>5</sup> on January 3:

<sup>1</sup> This is Eclogue II., entitled *Argus*—the name given to King Robert.

<sup>2</sup> "Jupiter" was a nickname given to Barili by the two other friends. P. himself was styled "Mercury," as this letter plainly shows (Frac. III. 438). It is strange that Fracassetti (*It.* V. 419) should suppose that it was Barili (not "Jove"), who was brought up in Ida (see above, Chap. XIV. p. 128, n. 5).

<sup>3</sup> To this letter are subjoined eight elegiac lines on Lælius (beginning "Lælius antiquis") which were published by de Sade III. (*Pièces Just.* V.); there were four other instances of P.'s use of this measure. Fracassetti's version (III. 440) has an obvious misprint in line 4 of "genus" for "geminus."

<sup>4</sup> Cod. VIII. Plut. XXIX. in the Laurentian Library.

<sup>5</sup> *F.* VI. 9.



"I will come to you whenever you wish, and will bring with me our Socrates, who is your most devoted admirer. We will come to-morrow, and will not shrink from appearing in the town, though attired in rough country garb. For yesterday, on a sudden impulse, we took refuge here out of the noisy and disorderly capital (like shipwrecked sailors seeking shore)—from a longing for retirement and leisure—dressed only in the fashion most suited to the country in winter. You bid us remove to your town 'just as we are'; and we will obey your command all the more willingly from our keen desire for your company. We will not care overmuch how we look externally so long as our 'inner man,' as we trust and hope, needs no trappings in your eyes. If you want to have us often as your guests, most loving father, pray heed our request that you will treat us to your usual fare, and not to a sumptuous and splendid meal."

It was certainly about this time—perhaps as a companion to Lælius on the first stage of his journey as far as Aix—that Petrarch paid a surprise visit to his brother Gherardo at the Chartreuse of Montrieux.<sup>1</sup> He had not seen him for nearly four years and, as we know,<sup>2</sup> had refrained from writing to him in deference to the strict rules of his order. The monastery is in the department of Var, about twenty-two miles by road from Toulon, though rather nearer in a direct line. It is situated, as its name implies, in a country of precipitous hills and rapid streams; and the former, in the immediate neighbourhood of the Chartreuse, are covered with forests of birch, holm-oak, and pine. So complete is its seclusion that even recently,<sup>3</sup> as doubtless in those days, the traveller was only warned of its proximity by the deep tones of the convent bell echoing through its silent woods. The direction from which it is now generally visited is the opposite of that from which Petrarch approached it. He describes it as lying ten miles to the right of the road from

<sup>1</sup> Baldelli (pp. 314, 315, n., following Tiraboschi, *Pref.* to t. V.) denies altogether this Montrieux journey of 1347 (see above, p. 375, n. 3). It is true that P. does not describe it in any of his epistolary collections; but in this censure of de Sade's chronology the two famous critics have gone completely astray. Fracassetti (*It.* V. 248, 249) and especially H. Cochin (*Le Frère de P.* pp. 200–203) have completely answered their objections by a comparison of *F.* XV. 2 and 3, XVI. 8 and 9, and *Sen.* VI. 5 with the dedicatory letter to *De Ot. Rel.* It is most improbable that Gherardo met P. (as Baldelli suggests) anywhere but at Montrieux.

<sup>2</sup> See above, Chap. XV. p. 212.

<sup>3</sup> Thus I heard its bell myself in April, 1898, as I was approaching the monastery, where I was hospitably received by its inmates.

Avignon to Nice <sup>1</sup>; and the point at which he left that road may have been the little town of Brignoles, now famous for its prunes. Near the village of Méounes—not far from a roadside cross marking the divergence of the forest path to the Chartreuse—he would enter the valley of the Gapeau, whose waters, after a turbid and tortuous course of about ten miles, pass under the Riviera line at Solliés-Pont. Not far from Belgentier—a thriving village in the upper valley with a lovely avenue of planes—a Benedictine house was planted in the eighth century; and the earlier Chartreuse, now in ruins and called “Montrieux le Vieux” is traditionally supposed to have occupied the site of its deserted buildings.<sup>2</sup> Beyond question, however, its place, as the religious house of the Gapeau valley, was taken by the Carthusians in 1117.

In one of his later letters <sup>3</sup> Petrarch gives an account—half legendary, half historical—of the origin of the foundation. According to this, two Genoese brothers—one an Eastern, the other a Western merchant—used to meet at the conclusion of their several journeys and compare notes of their gains and adventures. On one occasion the former, not finding his brother as usual, went to Marseilles to seek him and discovered that he had founded a Carthusian monastery in the mountains. On visiting the place, he was so charmed with its situation and with his brother’s adoption of the religious life that he himself built another for the same order in a neighbouring spot. Both men “dedicated the rest of their lives to Christ and persevered in their vows to the last. The two houses still remain, belonging to one family of Christ’s servants, and by their very aspect seem to proclaim that they had two founders, who were of one mind.” <sup>4</sup>

This legend rather suggests an attempt by the simple-minded monks to explain the existence of their two houses, situated about a mile apart; but the truth seems to be that the site of the principal Chartreuse was acquired some thirty years after the first foundation, but not occupied till the thirteenth

<sup>1</sup> *Frac.* II. 390.

<sup>2</sup> See *Notice sur le Monastère de Montrieux*, by M. le Comte H. de Villeneuve-Flayosc (Brignoles, 1895, p. 27). I am much indebted to this little brochure for the history of the monastery, though its references to P. are often inaccurate.

<sup>3</sup> *F.* XVI. 9 (to Zanobi da Strada).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* (*Frac.* II. 391).

century; and its church was not consecrated till 1252.<sup>1</sup> The older house, Montrieux le Vieux—lower down on the opposite side of the broad mountain spur—is now a ruin, but is well worth a visit from the extreme beauty of its situation. It lies on the side of a densely wooded valley, completely encircled by precipitous hills of the prevailing blue limestone; and at their foot an affluent of the Gapeau, called “Le Rieu froid,” winds its rocky way through the forest to the main stream, far below. In Petrarch’s time this first Chartreuse was not, as he seems to have thought, a sister house, but the “grange” of the priory, which was used as an infirmary, and contained two mills with a homestead for about 2000 sheep and goats. Among the ruins can still be made out the remains of the ancient chapel; and the whole precinct is dominated by a kind of “keep” of natural chalk, which may have been used as a watch-tower. Excavation has brought to light the remains of a tannery, so that the monks were independent of the outside world even for their clothes; and in their first winters these must necessarily have been thick, since the buildings had no windows, but only narrow loopholes in the walls.<sup>2</sup> In 1347, however, for more than sixty years the monks had added to their other avocations the art of making glass, which was profitably carried on in the neighbouring woods. I have given a full description of this earlier house, not merely because it was used in Petrarch’s day, but because in the very next year (1348) it was almost certainly the scene of Gherardo’s heroism during the terrible visitation of the Black Death.<sup>3</sup>

The later house—called for distinction “Montrieux le Jeune”—had then been inhabited by the monks for nearly a century and a half. It has since been twice destroyed and twice restored<sup>4</sup>; and in the first year of this century its cells became once more untenanted<sup>5</sup> through the severe law, which compelled so many religious communities to leave their ancient homes. It contains a large and a small cloister—the latter on the right

<sup>1</sup> Villeneuve-Flayosc, pp. 100–102.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 17.

<sup>3</sup> *F.* XVI. 2 (to Gherardo), probably of 1352. See Chap. XXI. below.

<sup>4</sup> In the sixteenth century it was thrice pillaged (in 1524, 1540 and 1578) and evacuated on the third occasion; at the Revolution (in 1792) the monks were robbed and dispersed, and the site remained desolate for half a century till the rebuilding in 1845–1858 (Villeneuve-Flayosc, 66–88).

<sup>5</sup> The monks were expelled in 1901; I have not heard the fate of their property.



of the main entrance ; and the church, which is on this side and has a double clock-tower, is chiefly an erection of the seventeenth century. The whole precinct of the modern convent, including a walled kitchen-garden to the left of the large cloister, encloses a space of about two and a half acres. Probably it was at least as extensive in the fourteenth century, though the buildings may have been smaller and less pretentious. It has always had an ample supply of fresh water from the abundance of the neighbouring springs. The number of inmates of all ranks (except servants) probably did not exceed twenty—the limit allowed by the ancient Rule<sup>1</sup>—of whom about half were “monks of the choir” (now called “Fathers”)—*i.e.* members of its governing body ; the rest were “Brothers,” of somewhat inferior social rank.

This visit of Petrarch—like his second six years later—seems to have been short, covering only a day and a night. The particulars that we have of it are entirely drawn from the treatise (*De Otio Religioso*) which it at once inspired him to write, and especially from the dedicatory letter to this “happy family of Christ.” He would probably arrive in the morning, and, after a private interview with his brother, would be introduced to the rest of the society, whose frugal midday meal he would share. In the afternoon, when the rule of silence would be relaxed in honour of their illustrious guest, the monks would allow him to inspect the arrangements of their two houses, with the small library in a room above the Prior’s lodging<sup>2</sup> and the little school in which novices, and even some children of tender years, were instructed.<sup>3</sup> He would join in the services of “the choir,” and he seems to have been specially attracted by their “angelic psalmody,” though it was of the plainest kind and was unaccompanied by any instrument.<sup>4</sup> In the evening he would converse with them individually—listening to them (he says) as to “oracles from heaven”—and would learn their personal

<sup>1</sup> Cochin, p. 61 and note.

<sup>2</sup> For details of the library (taken mainly from *De. Ot. Rel.*) see Cochin, pp. 99–103.

<sup>3</sup> This is plain from *De Ot. Rel.* II. (“*pueris novitiisque vestris*,” B. ed. p. 354), followed by four lines from Prosper—then the school-book for beginners in Latin. The fact, says M. Cochin (p. 98), is remarkable, for there are no traces of Carthusian schools before the sixteenth century.

<sup>4</sup> So we may guess from the *Statutes* of 1368, which expressly forbid any kind of instrument (*ibid.* p. 71, n.).

history. The Prior, Percival de Valence, who had been elected two years before,<sup>1</sup> was a man of good family and may have met him in Avignon before retiring from the busy world. Among the elder "Fathers" were some old enough to have seen Boniface VIII.<sup>2</sup>; they would tell him of the troubled times experienced by the monastery about thirty years before, when the monks found protectors against episcopal and feudal encroachments in Pope John and Robert of Naples. He would sleep in the guest-room in the box-bed which their order prescribed<sup>3</sup>; and in the morning, after attending the earlier services of the day, he felt bound, in consideration for their privacy, to hasten his departure. The older monks bade him farewell on the threshold; the younger, with Gherardo, accompanied him to the cross in the Gapeau valley—the limit of such excursions prescribed by their Rule. Before parting, the brothers conversed for a few minutes apart, while the other monks stood at a discreet distance, and Gherardo then gave his brother the pious advice, of which we hear in a later letter.<sup>4</sup>

If, as seems certain, the visit was paid before the end of January, Petrarch would have returned to Vacluse before Ash-Wednesday, which fell this year on February 14.<sup>5</sup> He employed the sacred season in writing his short treatise on "The Leisure of the Religious," to which we shall recur in a later chapter.<sup>6</sup> The letter of dedication to the community, from which I have already taken some phrases, was written at once; it is full of reminiscences of his visit and explains why he undertook the task.

"It would have been only right if I had said something which my devotion and our common love of the Lord might commend to your good opinion. But the time was short, and by this my mind was oppressed; and (as with all life's sweetness more fleeting than the wind), I came and was gone, so that—to use Cæsar's saying in a very different matter—'I came, I saw, I conquered.' If to 'conquer' is to obtain one's wish (as is the conqueror's way), I conquered in obtaining mine. I came into

<sup>1</sup> He was elected in 1345 and died of the plague in 1348.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 98.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 72.

<sup>4</sup> *F. X.* 5 (of December, 1349).

<sup>5</sup> Easter Day in 1347 fell on April 1.

<sup>6</sup> See Chap. XXXIII., "On P.'s Minor Latin Works,"

Paradise, I saw God's angels—inhabiting, indeed, an earthly abode, yet in time, when this exile is past, destined to dwell in heaven with Christ, whom they serve. . . . As I left, followed by your eyes and (as I trust in your love) by your prayers, I seemed in seeking one brother among you, to have found many. Now at length, after returning to my solitude with my mind full of the sweetness I drained—like a bee settling on the Lord's flowers—I find much in my private meditations, which that too brief time has afforded for my lasting profit. And so what I then passed over in the bustle of my visit I purpose now to supply and to speak in writing what I could not say *vivâ voce*—if indeed the voice of such a weary, ignorant, worldly sinner as I can be said to have 'life.' When the hand pays the debt of the tongue, its work, if not more pleasing, is at any rate more lasting; for though graver words pass, written trifles endure. I will write then, since, though it will not profit you to hear anything from me, it will always be of use to me to utter such thoughts if I can. If only I listen to myself and am not—as is the preacher's usual way—at once garrulous and deaf, I will write in the style of a sermon to myself here and of a letter to you who are absent—although, to confess the truth, in my higher and better part I am present with you.”<sup>1</sup>

Accordingly the treatise that follows is a homily on a text from the Psalms<sup>2</sup>; it abounds in citations from Scripture, showing that the writer knew his Vulgate well, and it is at once less literary and more theological than any other of his works.

That this visit made, at least for the time, a deep impression upon Petrarch is evident from the later letter already mentioned, but perhaps still more from a fleeting plan which he entertained in this year of settling near his brother with the licence of the Prior of Montrieux. On September 9 the Pope replies to “a supplication” of Petrarch that he may be allowed to hold the revenues of his benefices, residing in one of them, and to settle near his brother with his friend Ludovicus Sanctus (Socrates), “a clerk of the diocese of Liège and his very dear comrade and friend in the Cardinal's service, who has always been like a brother to him, and who desires never to be separated from him till death.” The request was granted for a period of two years.

This project, proof of which has only recently been discovered

<sup>1</sup> From the dedicatory letter (“*Dignum erat*”), B. ed. p. 331.

<sup>2</sup> The first words of Psalm xlv. 11 (in the Vulgate), “*Vacate et videte.*” In the English versions it is Psalm xlv. 11, “Be still, then, and know (that I am God).”



in the Vatican archives,<sup>1</sup> is not easily comprehensible; it is difficult to reconcile it with the later events of this crowded year. How is the "residence" of Petrarch in one of his benefices compatible with his settling near Montrieux, which is hundreds of miles from any of them? And if his plan was to reside in Italy for part of the year and in Provence for the remainder, why was the Pope's consent necessary for such an arrangement? Judging from Petrarch's whole career, we should imagine that "regular residence" was not indispensable for any benefice that he held; at any rate, if there were such a rule, it is patent that he never kept it. Moreover, the date of the "supplication" (September 9) is scarcely consistent with his declared intention in that month of proceeding shortly to Italy. I believe the explanation to be that September 9 is the date of the reply to a request made nearly five months earlier, and never withdrawn, although his plans—if such an irresolute person can be said to have had "plans"—had been completely altered in the interval. The same "supplication" makes other requests, one of which was for the legitimation of his son Giovanni; and the "brief" granting this petition was issued on the same date (September 9).<sup>2</sup> Since the delays of business in the Curia were notorious, this fact amounts to proof that the "supplication" was presented long before. The project of living near Montrieux was probably formed when the impressions of his visit to Gherardo were still recent. He may have been enchanted with the beauty of the upper Gapeau valley, and may have persuaded Socrates that he could join him there for some months in the year without sacrificing his means of subsistence at Avignon. All this, it may be said, is mere conjecture; but it seems certain that, whatever may have been the reasons for the change, the plan was abandoned before the Pope's consent was given.

What is beyond dispute is that in the spring of this year Petrarch's restless spirit was meditating a removal from Vaucluse, which he intended should be final.<sup>3</sup> There were various reasons

<sup>1</sup> It was first published by Carlo Cipolla in his *Note Petrarcesche desunte dall' Archivio Vaticano in Memorie di Reale Accad. di Torino*, Series II. t. LIX. pp. 1-32 (1909).

<sup>2</sup> Given textually in de Sade III. (*Pièces Justif.* No. XVIII. p. 49).

<sup>3</sup> He admits this in *F.* XI. 12 (to Luca Cristiano of July 19, 1351)—his apology for returning to Vaucluse in that year after expressly rejecting the idea in *F.* VIII. 3 (to L.C.)—(H), "Quo, ut nosti, nunquam amplius redire decreveram" (*Frac.* II. 137).

for this resolve—some recent and others of much longer standing. About this time he seems to have lost the company of his cousin Albizzi, who continued his travels into the north of France, perhaps to Paris. To supply the void created by his departure, the poet would sometimes be drawn into the vortex of “the Hell of the living,” where some of his dearest friends resided. He could not enjoy their society without submitting to business tasks for the Cardinal which he disliked, and without meeting “proud prelates” who treated him with a disdain against which his sensitive soul revolted.<sup>1</sup> He records a conversation with his patron,<sup>2</sup> in which he said that their pride was enough to weary the patience of God and man and would meet with a terrible fall. In reply the Cardinal somewhat tartly wished him the blindness of Tiresias rather than his gift of foresight, adding that the Lord Himself had to pray for Simon that his faith should not fail. The poet retorted (he says in jest) that he was not prophesying the failure of faith, but the ruin of those who were overthrowing it; for that might promote an increase of faith itself. On this the Cardinal sharply bade him hold his tongue, saying, “Even if your forecast is true, let us not father the idea.”

The truth seems to be that Petrarch was already fretting against the very gentle chain, which still bound him to the Cardinal. He had outgrown the period of subservience, and was now becoming independent of the support which had raised him from obscurity. On the 29th of the previous October (1346) the Pope had appointed him to the prebend of Coloreto<sup>3</sup> in the cathedral church of Parma. We may assume that this prebend was of considerable value, for it had hitherto been attached to the archdeaconry of the cathedral. The Pope, however, had decided to separate the two offices, appointing to the archdeaconry his chaplain, Dino da Urbino.<sup>4</sup> The tenure of this benefice gave

<sup>1</sup> This I take to be the meaning of *Ecl.* VIII. ll. 23–26 :

“Adde supercilii pondus, quod non gravis æquet  
Etna jugis, non Ossa rigens, non alter Olympus.  
Id prius æquanimis tuleram; indignantior ætas  
Est senium.”

If this pride were the Cardinal's, how can it be reconciled with *Ep. Post.* (Frac. I. 6), where he is spoken of in diametrically opposite terms?

<sup>2</sup> This passage is in *S. T.* 16 (supposed to be to Lælius) in B. ed. p. 802. Cf. Hortis (*Scritti Inediti di F. P.*), pp. 254, 255.

<sup>3</sup> The text of this brief is not given by de Sade, but is still extant. Cf. Fracassetti (*It.*) iii. 313, and Ronchini, *La dimora del P. in Parma*, p. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Fracassetti (*It.*) i. 527.

the poet an assured position in the city where he already had a home of his own ; and the purchase of Parma by Luchino Visconti about the same time had at length restored peace to this "cynosure" of neighbouring princelings. Its bishop, Ugolino de' Rossi—though belonging to the faction opposed to the Correggi—had hitherto treated Petrarch with marked favour<sup>1</sup> ; there were as yet no signs of the petty calumnies, which poisoned the Bishop's mind against him at a later date. We may well believe that his friends at Verona<sup>2</sup> were urging him to assert his newly won independence and settle finally in Italy.

It would be only natural if the Cardinal, to whom he owed so much, displayed some displeasure at this resolution. But we are not to suppose, as some have done,<sup>3</sup> that Petrarch's eighth Eclogue, entitled "Divortium," represents an actual conversation that took place between them. It is rather, as I read it, an attempt to exculpate himself in his own eyes and before posterity from the charge of ingratitude to which he felt he was exposed. By his own confession in his correspondence<sup>4</sup> the Cardinal had been a most affectionate and indulgent master ; and if, as I have conjectured, he continued—while granting him so much liberty—to pay him a money salary, he had treated him with singular generosity. In the Eclogue, sad to relate, there is little recognition of these benefits. Petrarch represents that his patron has become harsh and intractable with increasing age ; and of himself he says that he entered his service poor, and is leaving it still poorer.<sup>5</sup> I do not think that these sentiments, or anything like them, can have been personally expressed to the Cardinal for the simple reason that they were not true. It is possible that the poet, who was always jealous of his independence, may have thought that the Cardinal made insufficient allowance for his changed position, and that he might have done more to provide for him

<sup>1</sup> See his letter to the Bishop in 1352—*F. IX. 5* (Frac. II. 20), "Multo semper honore prosecutus."

<sup>2</sup> An instance of his close relations with Azzo is furnished by the "supplication" just mentioned, in which he also asks for the legitimation of a twin-son of his friend.

<sup>3</sup> De Sade (II. 220) coolly speaks of it as an accurate record of an interview with the Cardinal. See also Mrs. Jerrold (p. 93) and M. E. Cosenza (p. 169).

<sup>4</sup> See, especially, *Ep. Post.* (Frac. I. 6) ; *F. V. 2* (Frac. I. 252, 253) and *App. VI.* (Frac. III. 523), "reverentia ducis nostri, sub quo esse pluris erat quam libertas" (identical with *Frac. I. 421*).

<sup>5</sup> *Ecl. VIII. ll. 21, 22.*



than he did. But his expressions of affection and of gratitude for past favours sound perfunctory; and his description of his service as "slavery" is worse than poetic exaggeration. In enlarging on his love of liberty and his preference for Italy he is giving reasons that were true enough; and he plainly confesses his dislike of "the wild wood" (Avignon) and its persistent "Mistral." He says that a shepherd named Gillias (whom his commentators identify with Azzo) first showed him the beauties of his native land and is now urging him to return to it. But the conclusion shows a want of delicacy that is rare with Petrarch. The Cardinal is made to say angrily that his departing attendant will live and die in poverty; while the poet retorts that his patron's enjoyment of his own rich pastures will be disturbed by bitter troubles.<sup>1</sup> This creates the impression, which is probably false, that there was an open breach between them, and that they parted in anger. There is no allusion to any political differences from first to last; and this is perhaps an indication<sup>2</sup> that the *Eclogue* was composed before the startling event, which threw Petrarch into a fever of excitement in the middle of June.

That event was the sudden assumption of power at Rome, in the absence of the chief barons, by his old friend Cola di Rienzo as the "Tribune of Freedom," in nominal conjunction with the Pope's Vicar, Raymond, Bishop of Orvieto. The news of this bloodless revolution seems to have been at first unofficial; but it was confirmed in a few days by letters from the new governors appealing for Clement's sanction.<sup>3</sup> The Pope and Curia, who had been at first alarmed, were reassured by this admission of their rights and decided to recognize the new authorities as joint "Rectors of the Roman people." Clement would hear by the first official messenger that the leading barons had sworn allegiance to the new government; and he would be inclined to regard the

<sup>1</sup> Rossetti (I. 280) sees the impropriety of the last words in P.'s mouth and would assign them to the Cardinal; but he admits that this has no MS. authority. The Cardinal is disguised as "Ganymede," because he had been taken by "Jove" (the Pope) to be his cupbearer; P. is Amiclas, a poor fisherman. (Cf. Lucan, *Pharsalia*, Lib. V. 519-576.)

<sup>2</sup> Rossetti (I. 141) appears to think that the Cola affair is not mentioned because it was a tacit subject of disagreement. But I feel sure that the Cardinal never saw or was intended to see the *Eclogue*; and P. in his old age would have been ashamed to comment on it.

<sup>3</sup> The revolution occurred on Whit-Sunday, May 20; and Cola did not write to the Pope till June 4.

movement as a merely temporary revolt of the people against the nobles, which would not affect his general Italian policy. Petrarch, who (as we have seen) had an intimate knowledge of Cola's character and aims, might perhaps have increased the Curia's alarm, if he had chosen to tell all he knew. On receiving the news he would be sure to hurry to Avignon and would not leave it till he was assured that the new government would be recognized by the Pope.

We reserve for another chapter a full narrative of Cola's meteoric career and of Petrarch's public relations with him. At present we are only concerned with the effect of this momentous intelligence upon the course of his secluded life in the summer of 1347. It is plain that for the time it engrossed all his thoughts and induced him to lay aside all literary tasks not immediately connected with it. He wrote several letters to the Tribune<sup>1</sup>; and some of them at least were meant to be communicated to the Republic, of which he was now proud to call himself a citizen. But we need not take literally his apparent claim in one of them to have written a fresh letter every day.<sup>2</sup> He may mean only that in his delirious joy he made it his chief business to keep in touch with his Roman hero. Nor need we suppose that he spent a great part of the summer in the hated city,<sup>3</sup> waiting for further news, and alienating the sympathy of his patron and other Cardinals by his enthusiasm for the new demagogue. This would have been a useless penance to himself and a failure in the natural tact, which was one of his best qualities. He had plenty of friends in close relation to the Curia, who would at once send him any important news. Therefore after a few days' stay, during which he may have written his famous "hortatorial letter"<sup>4</sup> to the Tribune and the Romans, he would return to Vaucluse,

<sup>1</sup> Seven letters are extant which were written in 1347. They are *S. T.* 2 and 3, *Var.* 38, 40, 42, 48 and *F.* VII. 7 (the latest).

<sup>2</sup> "Quotidie" (*Var.* 38). But many of his letters must have taken days to compose.

<sup>3</sup> M. E. Cosenza (*F. P. and the Revolution of Cola di Rienzo*, Chicago, 1913) seems to suppose (pp. 98, 99) that P. did not leave Avignon for Vaucluse and write the Eclogue (with the letter about to be quoted) till towards the end of August. For the reasons given in the text I regard this hypothesis as inadmissible. Moreover, the Eclogue was evidently written when P. (like the Pope and Curia) regarded the revolution as affecting only Rome. This would not be true, after the news arrived of Cola's summons to a national Parliament.

<sup>4</sup> *Var.* 48.

and there in July compose another Eclogue<sup>1</sup> in celebration of this signal event. He could not refrain from forwarding it at once to the Tribune with the following letter<sup>2</sup> explaining its purport :

“ I recently left Avignon for ‘ the Closed Valley,’ so called from its very nature. It is my accustomed haven from the storms of this Curia, commonly styled ‘ Roman,’ in whose service I am growing old, though still but a rude and inexperienced navigator. The place is distant fifteen miles from the most turbulent of cities and from the left bank of the Rhône. Though it is so near, it is so dissimilar that in passing from one to the other I seem to have journeyed from the furthest west to the extreme east. They have nothing in common but the sky ; the men, the water, the land, present a wholly different appearance. Here is the Sorgues, reckoned among the coolest and most famous of streams, remarkable for the transparency of its water and the emerald hue of its bed, and unexampled for its frequent changes from a foaming torrent to a silent pool<sup>3</sup> . . . This is the country-seat, where I am detained beyond the bounds of Italy by the ties of adamantine necessity. It is most suited to my studies from the shade of its hills, alike in morning and evening, from the recesses of its sunny valleys—so solitary that you would see more traces of beasts than of men—and from its deep and perpetual silence, broken only by the murmur of the falling stream, by the lowing of cattle as they feed on the banks, and by the songs of birds. I would say more of it but that this spot, from its rare gifts of nature, has long been known far and wide through my poems. . . . The very sight of its glades suggested to me a woodland and untutored strain. And so to the bucolic song which I composed last summer in this valley I have added one chapter, or—to speak poetically, as on such a subject I should—one Eclogue. I have sent this conversation of two shepherds (who are also two brothers) as a solace to you, most studious of men, in your manifold cares. And since the nature of this kind of composition is such that its meaning might perhaps be guessed, but cannot be wholly understood without an explanation from its author, I will briefly summarize my meaning. (I do this, that I may not urge you, intent as you are on the most important deeds of the

<sup>1</sup> Ecl. V. (*Pietas Pastoralis*).

<sup>2</sup> *Var.* 42.

<sup>3</sup> P. here mentions, with the pride of a Roman citizen, that the fountain of the Sorgues was mentioned by Pliny (see above, Chap. XIII.), and incidentally marvels that he places it in Gallia Narbonensis, though it is really in Arelatensis. This is quite correct, for the Rhône was the eastern boundary of the former.



Republic, to puzzle yourself with pastoral talk or to exercise your divine gifts in unravelling my trifles.)

"The two shepherds are two sorts of citizens dwelling in the same city, but differing widely as to its interests. One is 'Martius'—that is, 'war-like' and restless (from Mars, whom the ancients pretended was the parent of our founder), yet dutiful and compassionate towards his mother, who is Rome. The other brother is 'Apicius' (whom we know as a master of cookery),<sup>1</sup> by whom you must understand those given up to pleasure and indolence. Between these two there is a great conflict on the duty owing to their old mother—especially about restoring her ancient homestead (which is the Capitol) and the bridge by which she used to go into the country (viz. the Milvian bridge over the river Tiber).<sup>2</sup> . . . The shepherd mentioned in that connexion, who caught and killed the thieves, is M. Tullius Cicero, the discoverer at the Milvian bridge of the conspiracy of Catiline. As consul, he is rightly called 'shepherd,' and rightly too is he 'clever' from his mastery of eloquence. The 'wood' and the 'small flock' to whom the ruined bridge is an injury, are the Roman People. The 'wives and children,' for whom Apicius provides to the neglect of his mother, are his lands and vassals. The 'caves' mentioned are the fortresses of the powerful, for by relying on these they insult the public distress. Apicius does not want the Capitol to be restored, but rather that Rome should be rent into two parts, so that each party should alternately share the government. His brother strives after unity; and where he mentions his mother's 'riches' in regard to the rebuilding of the Capitol, you should understand that Rome is still powerful, if her sons were united; for the 'sheep and heifers' that she feeds are the lowly plebs and militia. Among the ruins of her old fortunes is mentioned 'a hidden store of salt'; you may understand this simply as the public revenue from salt (which I hear is great) or (better) as the 'wisdom' of the Romans, long concealed through fear of tyranny. While they dispute on these topics, the Swift One enters, who is Rumour—

"'Than whom no ill is swifter,' as Virgil says.<sup>3</sup> The 'Swift One' reproves their vain concerns and useless squabbles, announcing that their mother has disowned them and that, with her consent, a younger brother is building the home, ruling the woods, imposing silence on the first speakers, while singing sweetly to the flocks—that is, introducing just and abolishing unjust laws.

<sup>1</sup> The most famous of the "bons vivants" so called flourished under Tiberius and is twice mentioned by Juvenal (*Sat.* iv. 23, xi. 3).

<sup>2</sup> P. here describes the course of the Tiber—not from north to south (as in Cosenza, p. 107), but the reverse way.

<sup>3</sup> *Æn.* IV. 174.

Under the figure of ' wild beasts ' I have concealed the names or nature or armorial bearings of some of the tyrants.<sup>1</sup> You are that younger brother. The rest is clear. Farewell, illustrious Sir, and remember me."

We have here the " plot " of a Petrarchan Eclogue, explained at length by its inventor ; it seems as cryptic, even in its smaller details, as a double Acrostic in verse. On one point apparently Petrarch did not dare to be more explicit, because the packet might be opened by hostile hands either at Avignon or at Rome. From certain lines <sup>2</sup> it is patent that by " Martius " is meant the house of Colonna and by Apicius the house of Orsini. I take it as a certain proof that the Eclogue was written while the news was fresh,<sup>3</sup> that he speaks of the barons without bitterness and of the Colonna even with indulgence, and also that he says nothing of the Tribune's wider aim to unite Italy under the ægis of Rome —a plan which he would have warmly approved, despite the suspicions which it aroused among the adherents of Avignon and of the Papal exile in France.

The Pope's assent to the revolutionary movement in Rome proceeded on the assumption that it was an endeavour to restore order and good government in the city itself ; he never intended that his new " Rectors " should presume to have a " foreign policy " at all. What, therefore, must have been his amazement and dismay, when he heard of the Tribune's decree of July 26, for the restoration of the ancient majesty and privileges of Rome ? This was in effect an attempt to unite the whole of Italy under the hegemony of Rome, and to do this without the permission, or even the concurrence, of the city's temporal sovereign. At first the French party in the Curia were alarmed, and the Italian amused, at a move which might compel the Pope to return to Rome, if these ambitions were not nipped in the bud. But the much more serious news that Cola was negotiating with the rebel " Bavarian " in order to pave the way for the invasion of

<sup>1</sup> By the " Boar " is meant either the Colonna or the Conti, by the " Serpent " the Gaetani, by the " Lion " the Savelli, by the " Eagle " perhaps the family of the Prefect Vico.

<sup>2</sup> See lines 137-140, alluding to the supposed origin of the Orsini at Spoleto and of the Colonna on the banks of the Rhine.

<sup>3</sup> In my opinion this disproves Cosenza's assertion that the Eclogue was not written till the end of August. See n. 3, p. 405.

the Papal fief of Naples by Louis of Hungary united all parties in the Curia against this fantastic Roman pretender.

The enthusiasm evoked by Cola's envoys in most of the Italian states, and his theatrical conduct on August 1 and 5, in which he posed as a kind of world-umpire, at length aroused the Curia to a sense of its danger. But it was his interference in the threatening quarrel between Hungary and Naples that caused the greatest consternation. On August 4 an embassy from Louis of Hungary was ceremonially received by the Tribune<sup>1</sup>; and about the same time Queen Joan and her princely cousins endeavoured to influence him on their side. It seemed as if this plebeian upstart, who was professing all the while his obedience to the Pope, really meant to arrogate to himself the supreme prerogatives of the Holy See. At first he shrank from giving his decision between Louis and Joan, and merely summoned both parties before his tribunal. Yet Clement soon obtained secret information which threw light on his real intentions, and the menace from Hungary became daily more insistent. Its king disregarded the threat of an interdict; and early in August an advanced guard of Hungarian knights was already assaulting the outlying fortresses of the southern realm.<sup>2</sup> On August 22 Queen Joan, with the direct connivance of the Pope,<sup>3</sup> gave her hand to her cousin Louis; and this last act goaded his Hungarian namesake to fury. He spurned the excuses proffered by Joan's envoys and announced his intention of speedily following in person the vanguard which was already desolating her cities.

It was perhaps this serious news, together with the necessity of preparing for his own impending removal, which brought Petrarch to Avignon early in September. He was beginning to feel concern for the safety of his friends in Naples, and he was also uneasy at the increasing hostility manifested by the Curia against the Tribune. His solicitude is evident in the following letter,<sup>4</sup> written to Barbato on September 11:

<sup>1</sup> See Gregorovius, Vol. VI. Pt. i (Eng. Trans.), p. 283, n. Louis is said to have sent two subsequent embassies to the Tribune.

<sup>2</sup> On August 8 Charles of Durazzo was already contending at Aquila against the Hungarian force under the Bishop of Pecs (Baddeley, p. 422).

<sup>3</sup> On June 21, Clement had sent a "contingent-dispensation" to his Legate in Naples—but it does not appear to have been publicly used. On November 8, at Joan's urgent request, he issued the formal document, though he rather cravenly disclaimed responsibility (Baddeley, p. 419).

<sup>4</sup> *F.* VII. 1.



“ Among the multifarious cares besetting me not the least is that which I feel on your account. None is dearer or sweeter to me than my Barbato ; love makes a man anxious, credulous, timid, uneasy, watchful, ready to start at shadows and harmless things. Here at last is what I have always feared, often written and daily talked about ; so foul a deed could not remain unpunished, and the vengeance has come later than I supposed. Turn, O God, thy wrath upon the authors of the crime and strike the guilty with condign punishment, but spare the good and faithful ! It is no fault of the innocent people, or of the ‘ sacred land ’ of Italy ; her soil already quivers with the tramp of the barbarian. We, who were once their conquerors, are now the prey of their victorious hosts. It may be that our sins have deserved it, or that some unjust and baleful star oppresses us, or (as I rather fancy) that we are all punished in a single mass for the crimes of others. But away with fears for Italy ! the rebels from which will rather have ground for dread, so long as the tribunician power, lately restored to the city, shall continue to flourish, and Rome be free from disease. The part of Italy which disquiets me is that which was once called ‘ Great Greece ’—that is, Bruttium, Calabria, and Apulia (now the Terra di Lavoro) and Capua, once so powerful, now (second to) Naples, the queen of cities. On those delightful lands an army from the wild banks of the Danube is now falling like a torrent, and our fair sky is being veiled in horrid clouds by a storm from the north, which I fear will burst with an awful crash while I am waiting for your reply. Such is the extreme danger according to report ; and men say that Sulmona, overwhelmed at the first onset, has surrendered to the foe.<sup>1</sup> Alas for the noble city, your birthplace and that of Ovid ! how I bewail thee for being to-day in the hands of those, his exile with whom<sup>2</sup> he considered to be worse than death. . . .

“ I am racked with alarm on your account ; but so far as I can see, I can neither advise nor help you. But since men sometimes have more power than they suppose, rely on my friendship, if I can be of any use. I confess I have some credit with the Tribune—a man of low origin but of lofty mind and purpose—and with the Roman people—not, however, for any merit of mine, but because God has compensated me for the hatred of bad men by the goodwill of the good. It is not that I have injured the one and benefited the other (nor that I have ceased to be bad

<sup>1</sup> This news was premature. Cipolla (*op. cit.* n. 1, p. 414) says that it was taken on October 20 ; but Baddeley (pp. 423-427) says that then it was besieged and only occupied by Louis on December 27.

<sup>2</sup> P.’s geography is here at fault. Tomi, the scene of Ovid’s exile, was on the Black Sea shore of the Dobrudja—forty miles south of the Danube, which was Hungary’s southern frontier.

myself and have become good !) but rather that I have resolved to hate the bad and love the good. I have always wished, and still wish (if I can) to flee from the crowd of the former into the select band of the latter. If then in the present danger my intercession with the aforesaid Tribune and people can help you, my mind and pen are at your service.

"Moreover I have a house in a distant part of Italy that is secure from these broils ; certainly it is small, but no house is too small for two men of one mind. It is inhabited neither by wasteful riches, nor poverty, nor avarice, but by innumerable books. This abode is now waiting for us both—for me on my return from the west, reproaching me for my two years' absence—for you, if you please and if the fates compel you, on your arrival from the east. I have nothing else to offer you. You know where the house is to which I invite you—in a spot healthy and joyous, free from alarm and suited for study. Whatever resolve you take, may God bring it to a happy issue ! I trust that my fears may be ill grounded, as they are caused by absence, which naturally increases a friend's anxiety. My mind will not rest till I either see you or hear by letter that you have weathered the storm. From Avignon in haste and concern." <sup>1</sup>

What strikes us most in this letter is not its evident agitation—which was excusable enough—but certain very noteworthy omissions. The writer's heart is evidently set on returning to Italy ; but he does not say when he is going, and he fixes no date for meeting his friend at Parma. Nor does he explain how the Tribune's influence could protect Barbato from the invading Hungarian hordes. Petrarch was too open to have concealed his enthusiastic sympathy for Cola from the Cardinal and his other friends. He knew that just then the Tribune was in very bad odour at Avignon, and he also *knew the reason*. It was because Cola was suspected of abetting the Hungarian attack upon the Papal fief of Naples ; and indeed about the very date of this letter he showed his hand by declaring in favour of Louis of Hungary.<sup>2</sup> Petrarch may have begun to suspect—though he hardly dared to confess it—that the Tribune's head had been turned by his extraordinary success ; and since Cola had already six weeks before invited him to Rome in flattering terms,<sup>3</sup> he may

<sup>1</sup> The last words are an addition in the "Colbertin" MS. at Paris.

<sup>2</sup> See Gregorovius (*loc. cit.*), p. 283, n. 1) and Baddeley (p. 418).

<sup>3</sup> This invitation is contained in Cola's letter of July 28. Its text is given by de Sade (from a Turin MS.) in t. III. (*Pièces Justif.* No. XXX. pp. 92, 93). Fracassetti (*It.* V. 415) wrongly gives the date as the 18th.

have pardonably believed that his influence would keep him steady and prevent him from alienating still further the support of the Papacy.

But in the present state of feeling it would be most unwise to make his intention public. That unlucky invitation was already known, at least to his private friends; and one of those very friends had been a sufferer from a recent freak of the Tribune. Before the revolution Lælius had been appointed a "Syndic" in his native city of Rome; and he had lately heard that the Tribune had summoned him by public crier to give account of his stewardship on pain of loss of office and confiscation of goods. Lælius had therefore asked permission to go to Rome and defend himself; but the Pope, in a brief of October 5, refused his consent on the ground that Cola had exceeded his powers, and that therefore his summons was null and void.<sup>1</sup> Petrarch might well fear that if he allowed his own intention to leak out, his patron would prevail upon the Pope to veto his proposed journey.

It was therefore necessary to proceed with great caution. He had a colourable pretext in his desire to be admitted to the canonry of Parma, conferred upon him in the previous autumn. If I am not mistaken, he had another of a more private nature. Two days before writing to Barbato, he had received the Papal brief legitimating his son Giovanni; and it was his intention to take this boy of ten years old, who was henceforth to bear his name,<sup>2</sup> to Italy with him and place him under the care of his friend Rinaldo da Villafranca at Verona. Armed with these excuses, he sought an interview with Clement, perhaps before returning to Vaucluse in September, and requested permission for his journey. He found the Pontiff in a gracious mood—with his mind full of a request he had had from his librarian, Giovanni Coto,<sup>3</sup> that Petrarch would assist him in collecting and annotating all the available works of Cicero.

These details we learn from a letter to the librarian,<sup>4</sup> which must have been written towards the end of October. The

<sup>1</sup> See the letter quoted (from Theiner t. II. No. 178) in Cosenza, pp. 189-191.

<sup>2</sup> He bears it in a legal document of June 25, 1351, at Parma. See G. Livi's documents relating to F. P. in *Atti e Memorie Modenense e Parmense*, New Series, III. (Modena, 1878).

<sup>3</sup> He is called "Episcopus Tricastrinus," but I cannot identify his see.

<sup>4</sup> F. VII. 4.



latter, hearing that Petrarch had not yet left Provence, had written to remind him of his promise to the Pope. The poet replies that to him the Pope's entreaties are commands, and that he will use his utmost diligence in the matter; his success must depend on his good fortune in finding the manuscripts desired. The scarcity of them, which is "the crime of our age," is notorious. He would have started sooner, but the state of his health has compelled him to await the cooler days of the late autumn.

The news which poured into Avignon during that fateful month of October was peculiarly critical and exciting; but in the minds of the Pope and his advisers everything was overshadowed by the threatening attitude of Hungary towards Naples. The Tribune was more than suspected of encouraging this for his own purposes; and his treacherous arrest of the Roman barons (September 15), although he pardoned them, would further incense their partisans in Provence. On October 7 Clement gave power to his Legate (then in Naples) to depose Cola, and in a further letter on the 12th he enumerates the Tribune's offences, foremost among which is reckoned his alliance with Hungary.<sup>1</sup> In his uncertainty as to Cola's actual power he forwarded to the Legate two separate documents, in one of which he speaks of him as excommunicate, in the other as a member of the Church<sup>2</sup>; the Legate was to exercise his judgment as to which he should use. At the end of the month the Pope would hear of the death from apoplexy of his old foe "the Bavarian" (October 11), and he would receive a quasi-apology from the Tribune (written October 11), in which he defends his relations with the Hungarian king, who had sent him a reinforcement of three hundred knights.<sup>3</sup>

It was known that that monarch was about to set out from his kingdom with his main army, and that he was assured of the sympathy of the rulers of Northern Italy. Therefore on October 23 couriers were dispatched in hot haste to the Doge of Venice (Andrea Dandolo) and to the lords of Padua, Ferrara and Verona, bearing letters, in which they were solemnly adjured to place every obstacle in his way. Hearing from the librarian that Petrarch had not yet started for the last city, Clement sent for

<sup>1</sup> See Gregorovius (*loc. cit.*); pp. 296, 297 and note.

<sup>2</sup> This recalls Boniface's procedure towards Philip the Fair. See Vol. I. p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Gregorovius, p. 301.

him and entrusted him with a letter to Mastino della Scala, in which his previous injunctions were repeated. This letter bears the date of November 13<sup>1</sup>; and at its close Mastino, who still held the post of Papal Vicar, was requested to attend to and execute the verbal communication brought by its bearer, "Master Francesco Petrarchi, clerk, of Florence."

However, all these frenzied measures to stay the advance of the invader were too late. Petrarch was fully in sympathy with their object; and if he read Cola's last letter to the Pope, he may even have been indignant that the Tribune should seem to support the "barbarian" invasion. Perhaps the poet did not realize the imperative necessity for his instant departure; at least he did not quit Vacluse till November 20—a week after the date of the important missive which he bore. He had many farewell visits to pay; and if we may judge from certain sonnets<sup>2</sup> on his last interview with "Laura," they both had a strong presentiment that they would meet no more on earth. He could not leave the Cardinal without emotion, despite the coolness which his support of the Tribune had produced between them. His patron does not seem to have openly opposed his journey; but it must have been tacitly understood that henceforth their relations would be less intimate. The poet was now to enjoy the independence which he had so eagerly claimed; and though he did not waver in his preference for freedom and for Italy, he may have had his misgivings as to the future in store for him there. He had also to leave many dear friends, some of whom appear to have thought that this severance of all his old ties would be injurious to his prospects.<sup>3</sup> The faithful Socrates accompanied him to Vacluse for a last private farewell; and the night before his journey<sup>4</sup> Lælius sent after him the latest dispatches from Rome,<sup>5</sup> which

<sup>1</sup> This letter, so far as I am aware, was first published by Carlo Cipolla in *Sul motivi del ritorno di F. P. in Italia nel 1347* (*Giorn. Stor. della Lett. Ital.* t. XLVII. pp. 253-265, 1906). He says that the passage referring to the Hungarian invasion is omitted in the Vatican transcript of the letter.

<sup>2</sup> Sonnets 211 and 212 (Part I.) with 1 and 59 (Part II.).

<sup>3</sup> See *F. VII.* 6—the rather enigmatic letter to Socrates, written on his journey (November 25).

<sup>4</sup> It is sometimes asserted that these dispatches only reached him at Genoa; but in his letter to Cola of November 29 (*F. VII.* 7) he merely says, "E curia digressum amicorum litteræ consecutæ sunt."

<sup>5</sup> This fact lends support to the statement made above that P.'s intimate friends knew of the Tribune's invitation and of his intention to accept it.

by placing the Tribune's conduct in a most unfavourable light must have added to the gloom of those last hours in his loved retreat. Next day the friends separated with many tears on both sides <sup>1</sup>; and Petrarch must have felt, as he turned southward, that a bright chapter in his life had closed, and that menacing clouds hung about his future.

<sup>1</sup> *F.* VIII. 7 (Frac. I. 442).



## EXCURSUS VII

### THE "EPISTLE TO POSTERITY"

IT has been commonly supposed<sup>1</sup> that the following autobiographical fragment was the work of Petrarch's old age, chiefly from the fact that it mentions the death of Pope Urban V., which occurred on December 19, 1370. But the poet's habit of interpolating passages in his works was so inveterate as to render this conclusion insecure. There are two references in his works to a composition of this kind, which both belong to the period of his residence in Milan (1353-1361). The first is in a letter to a friend which he has placed as a preface to the *Invectives against Physicians*<sup>2</sup>; this seems from internal evidence to belong to the later months of 1355. The second is in a letter to Boccaccio (*Var.* 25)<sup>3</sup> of August 18, 1360, from Milan. The curious thing is that in the first, which is five years the earlier, he speaks of his purpose as accomplished ("libellum de vitæ mea cursu contextui"); in the second, though his language is vague, he mentions it rather as a project. In both cases he is speaking of his desire to reply to the criticisms of his friends and others upon his settlement at the court of the Visconti in 1353; and, strangely enough, the *Epistle to Posterity* breaks off just before he reached that point in his life. Was it that he found his defence more difficult than he imagined, and finally decided that the best policy was silence? Or do the two passages just quoted refer to another work which has not come down to us? It is very difficult to choose between these two alternatives. We are entirely in the dark; but the first seems to me the more probable view. There is a passage in the *Epistle* (below, p. 420) in which he insists strongly on his independent attitude towards the great men under whose protection he had lived; he even goes so far as to say, "I studiously shunned anyone whose very name might seem to restrict my freedom." Whenever he wrote those words, he no doubt believed them to be true; but it would have been very

<sup>1</sup> By Fracassetti (*It.* i. pp. 233-235) by Prof. Robinson (1893), p. 76, and by F. S. Kraus, *F. P. e la sua Corrispondenza Epistolare*, Valbusa's translation, Florence, 1901, p. 17. (The original appeared in Berlin in 1896.) Both are following de Sade and the earlier biographers.

<sup>2</sup> B. ed. p. 1199.

<sup>3</sup> Frac. III. p. 367.

hard to make them agree with any reasoned apology for his residence at Milan. The *Epistle* is also silent on his relations with Rienzi; and since, in 1355, the ignominious death of the Tribune was quite recent, Petrarch would be especially sensitive about recalling his own enthusiastic support of "the last of the Romans." This motive might indeed have been also operative in 1372, though scarcely to the same extent. On the whole I am inclined to conjecture that Petrarch wrote the first draft of the *Epistle* at Milan about 1355, and that this ended with his account of the composition of the *Africa*. In his old age (about 1371 to 1373) he revised and rewrote the MS. adding the passages I have placed in brackets and in particular the last page (in Fracassetti's edition), which contains his tribute to the family of Carrara, then his especial patrons. Whether he ever intended to finish it may be left an open question, but it is permissible to express a doubt. As it is often quoted in the preceding chapters and refers chiefly to his early years, it seems best to give a full translation at this stage rather than at the time of its composition.

In his reference to it in *Var.* 25 Petrarch says that, so far as he is aware, no one before him had written an autobiography.<sup>1</sup> Koerting (p. 37) accepts the statement, and adds that since Petrarch was the first after the days of antiquity to strive for literary immortality, the *Epistle* "marks a boundary line in the intellectual history of mankind between mediæval and modern times." This view is traversed by Kraus (*op. cit.* p. 18), who thinks that his countryman must have forgotten Abelard's "History of his own calamities." But the letter which bears that title was sent to a friend, and even if intended for a larger audience in his own time, was not written with an eye to future generations, much less addressed to them. We know that Petrarch read and annotated this letter, for his manuscript copy of it still exists at Paris.<sup>2</sup> But his meaning (in *Var.* 25) was that none of the ancients had written a life of himself with the intention of its reaching posterity, and in this, so far as I know, he is correct. The *Vita Nuova* of Dante, which is also instanced by Kraus, is of an altogether different order—far less personal and far more ideal. And yet it must be admitted that Koerting's assertion of Petrarch's priority in the desire for posthumous fame is much too sweeping. Dante—as also some of his contemporaries, like Mussato of Padua<sup>3</sup>—was undoubtedly swayed by that "last infirmity of noble minds," although in the *Commedia* he

<sup>1</sup> "Quæ mihi cura . . . suggerit ut . . . de ratione vitæ meæ integro volumine disputem, quod ante me, ut arbitror, fecit nemo."

<sup>2</sup> De Nolhac, *P. et l'Hum.* ii. pp. 217–221.

<sup>3</sup> Mussato wrote a work *De Vita et moribus suis*, which has perished (G. Voigt, *Wiederbelebung*, p. 17).

condemns it<sup>1</sup> in a way which shows he was not exempt from the longing.<sup>2</sup> What is new in Petrarch is the determination to gratify in his own case the taste for personal details about famous people, which is so marked a feature of our own time.

*Francesco Petrarca to Posterity  
Greeting.*

“ Perhaps you will have heard somewhat about me, doubtful though it be whether a name so humble and obscure will penetrate far either in time or space. Perhaps, too, you will wish to know what sort of man I was, or what was the fate of my works—of those in particular whose reputation may have reached you, or whose bare titles you may have heard. On the first point, indeed, men’s judgments will vary. For almost every one is swayed not by truth so much as by his own preference; there are no bounds either to praise or to detraction. I was but a mortal mannikin like yourself, with an origin neither very high nor yet low. Of my family I will say, like Augustus Cæsar, that it was ancient. Nature gave me a disposition neither perverse nor immodest, if the contagion of habit had not injured it. Youth ensnared me; early manhood carried me away; but old age<sup>3</sup> corrected me, and by experience indoctrinated me with the truth, of which I had before read so often—that youth and pleasure are vanity. Nay, my real teacher was the Fashioner of all ages and times, who not seldom permits poor mortals to go astray, puffed up with nothing, in order that by a tardy consciousness of their sins they may learn to know themselves. In my early days my bodily frame was of no great strength, but of much activity. I cannot boast of extreme comeliness, but only such as in my greener years would be pleasing. My complexion was lively, between fair and dark, my eyes sparkling, my sight for a long time very keen [until it failed me unexpectedly after my sixtieth year, so that to my disgust I had to have recourse to glasses. Old age at length attacked a body that had always been most healthy, and besieged it with the usual array of diseases].

“ I was of honourable parents, both natives of Florence, with a fortune scanty and, to tell the truth, verging towards poverty, but exiled from their country. In that exile I was born at Arezzo, in the year of Christ 1304 of this last age, on Monday the 20th of July, at dawn. Riches I held in sovereign contempt—not that

<sup>1</sup> *Purgatorio*, XI. 85–117.

<sup>2</sup> See Jacob Burckhardt’s *Civilization of the Period of the Renaissance in Italy* (trans. by Middlemore), i. pp. 197, 198, and Prof. Oliver Elton, *Modern Studies* (1907), pp. 45–52.

<sup>3</sup> Petrarch would have considered himself “ old ” after fifty.



I did not desire them, but I hated the toils and cares which invariably accompany wealth. I do not mean such cares as the giving of splendid feasts; for I have spent my life on slender fare and common food, with more pleasure than all the successors of Apicius could have had in their most exquisite dishes. Banquets, as they are called, I have always disliked, because such common revelling is opposed to moderation and good manners; I thought it a tiresome and useless business to invite others for such a purpose and just as much so to be invited myself. But to live with <sup>1</sup> my friends is so agreeable to me that I thought nothing more delightful than their arrival, and never willingly took a meal without a comrade. I dislike nothing more than display, not only because it is bad in itself and opposed to humility, but because it is irksome and disquieting. In my youth I suffered from an attachment of the keenest kind, but constant to one object and honourable; and I should have suffered longer had not death—bitter indeed but useful—extinguished the flame as it was beginning to subside.<sup>2</sup> I wish I could say that I have been entirely free from irregular desires, but if I said so, I should lie. This much I can safely affirm, that though I was carried into them by the fire of youth and temperament, I have ever detested their vileness in my inmost soul. As I was approaching my fortieth year,<sup>3</sup> while my powers and my passions were still strong, I threw off my bad habits and every recollection of them, as if I had never looked upon a woman. And this I count among my highest blessings, and I give thanks to God, Who freed me while I was still sound and vigorous from a disgusting slavery, which was always hateful to me. But I pass on to other matters.

“I have been conscious of arrogance in others, never in myself; and however insignificant I may have been, I have always been smaller in my own estimation. My temper has very often injured myself, but never others. I have been most desirous of honourable friendships and faithfully cherished them; I can make this boast fearlessly, for I know that I speak the truth. While easily nettled, I have been very ready

<sup>1</sup> There is here a slight play upon words, which it is impossible to reproduce in English—the word “convivia” (banquets) being contrasted with “convivere” (to live with).

<sup>2</sup> This is generally regarded as but a cool description of the ardent passion of the Sonnets. But its restraint appears to me not so remarkable as its insincerity; for no one could suppose from the terms of it that the object of the attachment was a married woman, to whose chastity alone it was due, as P. himself confesses in his *Secret*, that he could call his love “honestus.”

<sup>3</sup> In a letter of old age (1366) to Boccaccio (*Sen.* VIII. I. B. ed. p. 915) P. places his definitive conversion from sensual pleasure seven years later at the time of the Jubilee (1350).

to forget offences and very grateful for acts of kindness. In familiar intercourse with princes and kings and in friendships with the great, my good fortune has been such as to excite envy. But it is the penalty of those who grow old that they too often have to regret the death of their friends. The greatest kings of my time have loved and courted me—why, I can hardly say ; it is for them to explain—and with some of them I was on such terms that *they* seemed somehow to be *my* friends, and I derived no embarrassment, but rather many advantages from their high rank. And yet many of those whom I liked extremely I avoided ; so great was my innate love of liberty that I studiously shunned anyone whose very name might seem to restrict my freedom.

“ My mind was rather well-balanced than acute ; and while adapted to all good and wholesome studies, its special bent was towards moral philosophy and poetry. But the latter I neglected, as time went on, from the delight I took in sacred literature. In this I found a hidden sweetness, though at one time I had despised it, so that I came to use poetry only as an accomplishment. I devoted myself singly, amid a crowd of subjects, to a knowledge of antiquity ; for this age of ours I have always found distasteful, so that, had it not been for the love of those dear to me, I should have preferred to have been born in any other. And so I strove to forget the present and engraft myself in spirit upon the past ; consequently I delighted in historians—not that I was the less offended at their discrepancies, but when in doubt, I followed sometimes natural probability, sometimes the better authority of the writer.

“ Some have said that, as a speaker, I was clear and powerful, but I thought myself weak and obscure ; nor in ordinary conversation with my friends or acquaintances did I ever strive after eloquence, and I marvel that Augustus Cæsar took pains to do so. When, however, the subject itself or the place or the listener seemed to demand it, I made somewhat of an effort—with what success I know not ; let those judge in whose presence I spoke. If so be that I have lived well, I care but little how I talked ; it is a windy sort of glory to look for fame from mere brilliancy of language.

“ My time, whether by fate or by my own choice, has hitherto been divided as follows. The first year of my life, or rather part of it, I spent at Arezzo, where I first saw the light ; the six following years, when my mother had been recalled from exile,<sup>1</sup> at Incisa, an estate of my father's about fourteen miles from Florence. My eighth year I passed at Pisa, my ninth and following years in Transalpine Gaul on the left bank of the

<sup>1</sup> Fracassetti's punctuation, which places these words in the next sentence, is obviously incorrect.



Rhône. The name of the city is Avignon, where the Roman Pontiff holds, and has long held the Church of Christ in a shameful exile ; [although a few years ago Urban V. seemed to have restored her to her true home. But the affair has come to nothing, it is plain ; and—what affects me most—even in his lifetime, as if he had repented of a good deed. Had he lived a little longer, he should certainly have known what I thought of his departure ; I already had my pen in hand when he abandoned life as well as his first glorious attempt.<sup>1</sup> Unhappy man ! When he might have died with honour before the altar of Peter, and in his own home ! For either his successors would have remained in their old see, in which case he would have been the originator of a good deed ; or they would have left it, and then his merit would have been all the more conspicuous by contrast with their fault. But this rather long lament is only by the way.]

“ There then, on the banks of that most windy of rivers, I passed my boyhood under my parents’ care, and afterwards all my early manhood under my own vain fancies—not, however, without long intervals of absence. For during this time I spent four whole years at Carpentras, a small town very near Avignon on the east ; and in these two places I learnt a smattering of Grammar, Dialectic and Rhetoric suited to my age—as much, I mean, as is generally learnt in schools—and how little that is, dear reader, you know well enough. Then I went off to Montpellier to study law, where I spent four years more, and then three at Bologna where I heard the whole Corpus of Civil Law, and was thought by many to be a youth of great promise, if I had persevered in what I had taken up. However, I abandoned that study altogether, as soon as the care of my parents abandoned me<sup>2</sup> ; not because I did not respect the authority of Law, which is doubtless great and full of that Roman antiquity in which I delight, but because it is degraded by the villainy of those who practise it. And so I revolted at learning thoroughly what I would not turn to dishonourable, and could scarcely turn to honourable, uses ; for such rectitude, if I had tried it, would have been set down to ignorance.

“ Accordingly in my 22nd year I returned to Avignon—my exile-home, where I had lived from the close of my childhood, for habit is second nature. There I had already begun to be known, and my acquaintance to be sought by men of mark, though why, I confess now I know not, and wonder ; but then I did not wonder at all, for I thought myself, as is the way with men at

<sup>1</sup> J. H. Robinson (*op. cit.* p. 65) rather absurdly renders “ *gloriosum principium* ” “ exalted office.” P. would never describe the Papacy as “ *principium* ” nor characterize it as “ *gloriosum*.”

<sup>2</sup> See Excursus II. (Vol. I. pp. 190, 191 and n.).



that time of life, to be worthy of every honour. I was sought after, above all, by the illustrious and noble family of the Colonna, who then frequented—I should rather say adorned—the Roman Curia. When summoned by them, I was held in honour—then at any rate unmerited, however it may be now—by that remarkable, nay, incomparable, man Giacomo Colonna, at that time Bishop of Lombez, whose equal I know not if I have seen, or ever shall see. He took me into Gascony, where I spent an almost heavenly summer at the foot of the Pyrenees in such delightful intercourse with my lord and his companions that I never think of that time without a sigh. On my return I was for many years with his brother, Cardinal Giovanni Colonna, not as if I were under a master, but a father—nay not that even, say rather a most affectionate brother, with whom I lived as if at home and in my own house. At that time a youthful longing impelled me to travel through France and Germany; and though other causes were feigned to recommend my going to my superiors, yet the real reason was an eager enthusiasm for seeing the world. On that journey I first saw Paris; and I took delight in finding out the truth or falsehood of what I had heard about that city. Having returned thence, I went to Rome, which from my infancy I had ardently desired to see; and there I so venerated Stefano Colonna, the noble-minded father of that family, who was like one of the ancient heroes, and I was so kindly received by him in return that you could scarcely have detected a difference between me and one of his own sons. The love and affection towards me of this excellent man continued ever unbroken to his last hour; in me it lives still, nor shall it ever leave me while life remains.

“On my return from Rome, as I could not overcome my natural ingrained repugnance to Avignon, that most wearisome of cities, I looked about for some bypath of retreat to be a harbour of refuge; and I found a narrow valley, delightful and secluded, called Vaucluse (fifteen miles from Avignon), where the Sorgues, king of all fountains, takes its rise. Charmed with the sweetness of the spot, I betook myself thither with my books. It would be a long story if I were to go on to relate what I did there during many, many years. Suffice it to say that nearly every one of my works was either accomplished or begun or conceived there; and they have been so numerous that they exercise and weary me to this day. For my mind, like my body, was remarkable rather for dexterity than for strength; and so I found many things easy of conception, which I have put aside as too difficult to execute. Here the very character of my surroundings suggested to me to attempt a pastoral poem, itself a work of the woods; and also two books on the Life of Solitude, [dedicated to Philip, a man great at all times, then only the

humble Bishop of Cavaillon, but now Cardinal-Bishop of Sabina. He is now the sole survivor of all my old friends, and has loved, and still loves me, not as a bishop, as Ambrose loved Augustine, but as a brother]. While I was roaming over those mountains on the Friday in Holy Week, the idea struck me forcibly of writing a poem in heroic verse on Scipio Africanus the elder, whose name—I do not know why—had been dear to me from boyhood. What I then began with great ardour I soon discontinued from various cares and distractions; but from the name of the subject I called it *Africa*—a work which, either from his fortunes or mine, excited much interest before it was known.<sup>1</sup>

“ While I was spinning out my leisure in this place, on one and the same day, strange to relate, there reached me letters both from the Senate of the city of Rome and from the Chancellor of the University of Paris,<sup>2</sup> bringing me rival invitations to accept the laurel crown of poetry—the former at Rome, the latter at Paris. In my youthful pride at such an honour, thinking I must be worthy of it as such eminent men had thought me so, but weighing their verdict instead of my own merit, I yet hesitated for awhile which invitation to accept; and on this point I asked by letter for the advice of the above-named Cardinal Giovanni Colonna. He was so near that although I had written late in the day, I received his answer next morning before nine o’clock. In accordance with his advice I decided for the dignity of the city of Rome as superior to all others, and my two replies to him are still extant,<sup>3</sup> applauding that advice. I set out accordingly; and though, like all young men, I was a very partial judge of my own works, I still blushed to accept the verdict upon myself even of such men as invited me; yet no doubt they would not have done so if they had not judged me worthy of the honour so offered. I determined, therefore, first to visit Naples, and appear before that distinguished king and philosopher, Robert—as illustrious in literature as in station, the only king of our time who was a friend alike of learning and of virtue—to see what judgment he would pass upon me. I wonder still at his flattering estimate of me and the kindly welcome that he gave me; and you, reader, if you knew of it, would wonder no less. On hearing of the reason of my coming, he was marvellously delighted, and considered that my youthful confidence in him—perhaps, too, the honour that I was seeking—might be a source of glory to himself, since

<sup>1</sup> It would hardly be guessed from this expression that the poem was still unpublished; but we must remember that he was writing to Posterity, for whom he evidently intended it.

<sup>2</sup> Roberto dei Bardi. He was Chancellor of Nôtre Dame (see Vol. I. p. 305).

<sup>3</sup> It is to be presumed that he means *F. IV. 4* and *5*; but the former was the letter asking for advice.



I had chosen him of all men as the only competent judge in such a case. Need I say more? After numberless conversations on various matters, I showed him that *Africa* of mine, with which he was so delighted that he begged me as a great favour<sup>1</sup> to dedicate it to himself—a request which I certainly could not refuse, nor did I wish to do so. At length he fixed a day for the object of my visit, and kept me from noon till evening; and since the time proved too short for the press of subjects, he did the same on the two following days; till having fully probed my ignorance<sup>2</sup> for three days, he adjudged me worthy of the laurel crown. His wish was to bestow it upon me at Naples, and he even earnestly begged me to consent; but my love for Rome prevailed over even the reverend importunity of so great a king. Therefore, when he saw my resolution was inflexible, he gave me messengers and letters to the Roman Senate, in which he declared his judgment about me in flattering terms. [This royal estimate was then, indeed, in accord with that of many others and especially with my own; to-day, however, I cannot approve his verdict, though it agreed with that of myself and others. Affection for me and interest in my youth had more weight with him than attention to fact.] So I arrived at Rome, and unworthy as I was, yet with confident reliance on such a verdict, I gained the poetic laurel, while still a raw scholar, with great applause from those of the Romans who could be present at the ceremony. On this subject, too, there are letters of mine<sup>3</sup> both in verse and in prose. This laurel gained for me no knowledge, but rather very much envy, but that also is too long a story to be told here.

“On leaving Rome, I went to Parma and stayed a short time with those brothers the Correggi, who were most kind and generous to me, though they agreed but ill among themselves. At the time they were ruling that city in a fashion which it had never experienced before within the memory of man, nor will experience again, I fancy, in these evil days. I was mindful of the honour I had just received and anxious that it should not seem to be conferred on one who was unworthy of it; and so one day when, during a visit to the mountains, I had chanced upon the wood called *Selva Piana* across the river *Enza* on the confines of *Reggio*, I was fired by the beauty of the place and turned my pen to my interrupted poem, the *Africa*. Finding

<sup>1</sup> The Latin is “*Magno pro munere*,” which Prof. Robinson (p. 72) renders in the text “in consideration of a handsome reward,” while admitting in a note that the other rendering is possible. Fracassetti, Develay and Mr. Reeve translate as above; indeed without this the rest of the sentence loses all its point.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Reeve (p. 24) translates, “I shook off my ignorance” (taking the primary meaning of “*excutio*”), and thus conveys a sense the very opposite of that intended.

<sup>3</sup> *F. IV. 7* and *Ep. Metr. II. i.*



my enthusiasm, which had seemed quite dead, rekindled, I wrote a little that very day and some on each successive day till I returned to Parma. [There, when I had obtained a quiet and retired house, which I afterwards bought and still retain, in no long time I brought the work to a conclusion, toiling at it with a zeal that amazes me to-day.

"Returning thence I sought once more my Transalpine solitude at the source of the Sorgues, when I was just turning my back on my thirty-fourth year.<sup>1</sup> I spent a long time both at Parma and Verona, and everywhere, thank God. I was affectionately treated—far more so than I deserved. After a long while the progress of my fame gained me the goodwill of Giacomo da Carrara the Younger, an excellent man, whose equal among the rulers of his time it would be hard, nay impossible, to find. By messengers as well as letters to me, even across the Alps whenever I was there, and also whenever I chanced to be in Italy, he entreated me so urgently for many years to embrace his friendship that though I had no hope of a happy result, I determined at length to visit him and see what was the reason of such solicitations from a man so eminent and a stranger to me. I came, therefore, though tardily, to Padua, where I was received by that man of illustrious memory, not merely with kindness, but as happy spirits are welcomed in heaven—with such great joy, such inestimable kindness and respect that I must pass it over in silence, as I cannot hope to do justice to it in words. Knowing, as part of my history, that I had embraced the clerical career from boyhood,<sup>2</sup> he had me appointed a Canon of Padua in order to bind me more closely to his country as well as to himself; in short, if he had lived longer, there would have been an end of all my wanderings and travels. But alas! nothing mortal is enduring; if aught of sweetness does present itself it is soon cut short by the bitter end. When in less than two years God summoned him from me,<sup>3</sup> his country and the world, He took away one, of whom—my love for him does not blind me—neither I nor his country nor the world were worthy. And though he

<sup>1</sup> This is a slip of memory, presumably from old age. P. was thirty-eight when he returned to Vacluse in 1342; and he seems here to confuse the two visits to Italy in 1341, 1342 and 1343-1345, for it was only during the latter (in 1345) that he spent some time at Verona. P. was never very accurate in dates; but these mistakes seem to show that the end of the letter was written later than the beginning.

<sup>2</sup> In his old age "boyhood" is with P. a very elastic term. He here extends it beyond his university career, for he could not have become a clerk while his father lived.

<sup>3</sup> P. speaks here as if he had spent these two years in Padua and had been present at Giacomo's end. In fact he only stayed at Padua three months in 1349 (March to May and December) and four months in 1350 (February to May). He was returning to Padua from Rome in December, 1350, when he heard of his friend's assassination.

was succeeded by a son of the utmost prudence and renown—one who, following in his father's footsteps, held me always in affection and honour—yet I could not stay after the loss of one, whose age was so much more congenial to my own. And so I returned again to Gaul, not so much from a desire to see once more what I had seen a thousand times, but from a longing, like that felt in illness, to relieve my weariness by change of place.]

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